THE NATIVE POLICY OF THE VOORTREKKERS

1836—1858

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THE NATIVE POLICY OF THE VOORTREKKERS

THE NATIVE POLICY OF THE VOORTREKKERS

AN ESSAY

IN THE HISTORY OF THE INTERIOR OF SOUTH AFRICA — 1836–1858

BY

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INTRODUCTION.

The essay which follows is the first attempt that has yet been made to present a survey of the native policy of those farmers who left the Cape Colony in 1836 and organized themselves into independent states in the interior of South Africa. The Great Trek is a phenomenon that coloured the whole course of the century, and both emigrant farmers and their enemies are agreed that it was bound up with questions of native policy from the very start. Vague feelings of discontent still rankle in connection with these dead and gone disputes, and can be exorcised only by examination in the light of day. The period closes with the acceptance of the first Constitution or "Grondwet" by the South African Republic in 1858.

The "Age of the Voortrekkers" may fairly be said to have come to an end with the establishment of a formal government and written constitution. The year 1858 marks the accomplishment of the change from the old personal rule of the period of migration to one resembling more closely that of an orthodox European state. Both A. W. J. Pretorius and A. H. Potgieter, the most characteristic figures of the Trek, died in 1853. The presidency of M. W. Pretorius, son to the former, belongs to the struggles of the second generation against forces of disorder and disunion within the Republics themselves.

In one other way the first Grondwet is something of a landmark. Its signatures include that of S. J. P. Kruger, only a child at the beginning of the Trek, but in 1858 one of the new generation in the politics of the Transvaal. M. W. Pretorius and Kruger belong to a different age from that of the Voortrekkers.

There is no reason for closing the age of the Voortrekkers before the first Grondwet. A certain unity is given to the preceding years by the lives of Potgieter and Pretorius, rival leaders of the Trek, while the ideas and institutions of the Trekker period form a whole that finds expression in the first written constitution. Naturally, the limit cannot be other than artificial.

The same problems confronted the new executive that had been the lot of the old leaders. Many who had lived through the Trek survived to take their part in the new age. The unity of the subject is better realised if it be remembered that the whole history of the Transvaal Republic, from the Great Trek to the Treaty of Vereeniging, was covered by the life of the one man, S. J. P. Kruger, and that there lived on, well into the third decade of the twentieth century, one of the children who suffered in the massacre of Weenen.

The question of native apprenticeship illustrates the same point. It was the subject of dispute between missionaries and emigrants in 1852 and 1853. The controversy died down, only to break out again in 1868, well on in the history of the Transvaal. This particular case has been met by the discussion in an appendix of the Blue Book of 1868 and its attendant controversy, but it is a reminder of the danger of attempting to fix hard and fast limits to a period.

In the pages that follow the controversial side of native policy has been distinguished as far as possible from the bare facts about which there can be no dispute. The treatment begins with a sketch of the situation in South Africa at the beginning of the Trek. There follows a brief account of that movement in its various phases, in the interior, in Natal and the Transvaal. The succeeding chapters have to face the great controversy. Beginning with a brief account of the missionaries they proceed to analyze the charges against the Boers and to estimate the value of the evidence available. The labour question, which involved the Republics in allegations of slaveholding, has been given separate treatment.

It will be seen that little space has been devoted to the Free State territory. This is due partly to the absence of material. The earliest records have disappeared, and the proclamation of the Orange River Sovereignty in 1848 brought the " Voortrekker period " to a much earlier close than in its northern neighbour. But it must not be forgotten that the Free State had no important native population. The plains were almost vacant when the farmers arrived, and their most serious problem came from the Basuto in the mountains beyond the eastern border. The other native inhabitants lived a life practically independent of the whites

in large reserves. Hence the missionary campaign was concerned almost entirely with the Transvaal Boers, and passed the Free Staters by without comment.

The native portion of the preliminary sketch is based largely upon the work of the Rev. J. E. Ellenberger, in his *History of the Basuto, Ancient and Modern*, while details have been filled in from Stow's *Native Races of South Africa*, Theal's own *History and Ethnography*, Cloete's *History of the Great Boer Trek*, and from a few relevant documents in the Pretoria Archives. The short account of the Great Trek owes a good deal to Cloete's *History*. Its author, member of a Cape family which had thrown its lot in with the British, was selected by the Governor for the difficult post of Commissioner to the Natal Republic. He thus had considerable knowledge of the circumstances of the Trek and, though by no means the impartial observer he is sometimes credited with being, undoubtedly did his best to hold the scales evenly. Theal criticised the accuracy of the *History* in matters of detail, but he was content to follow it almost literally himself. Cloete has been checked and supplemented wherever possible by reference to the *Annals of Natal* and the original Natal records.

The evidence is restricted to the usual classes of printed and manuscript material. A little oral testimony may possibly exist, but its quantity is negligible, and its trustworthiness, at this distance of time, more than doubtful.

The printed material comprises books of travel and description, the Parliamentary Blue Books and printed collections of sources. The books fall into classes according to the nature and occupation of their authors—missionaries, hunters and travellers, and the officials of the various philanthropic societies. With one or two unimportant exceptions all the printed literature is in English, and most of it written from a standpoint of opposition to the farmers.

The greater part of the missionary literature is the work of what may be called the "London School." The authors were connected officially, one way or other, with the London Missionary Society. For the present purpose the most important of these was Livingstone, who spent some years on the Western frontier of the Transvaal, for a few of which he was missionary at the kraal of the Bakwena chief, Sechele. He has a good deal to say

on the relations that existed between the Boers and the natives in general, and is able to quote particular instances in support of his conclusions. His published works are directly unfavourable to the farmers and Theal calmly disposed of them as " practically useless for historical purposes," but their value cannot be set aside by sweeping assertion. Livingstone had considerable opportunities for ascertaining the truth. He was adviser and confidant of the most important chief on the frontier, and had frequent intercourse with the Boer farmers. The deep seated dislike for the latter which characterizes his writings may make necessary a certain degree of caution, but the fact remains that Livingstone was a first-hand witness, and his considered opinion must be listened to with respect.

Other missionary productions exist and will be quoted in their place, but in most cases their authors depended upon others for their facts, and their books are interesting as illustrations of the literature available for students in Great Britain rather than for their intrinsic value. Almost the only missionary apologist for the farmers was the Reverend Mr. Hofmeyr, whose *Twintig Jaren in Zoutpansberg, een verhaal van Twintig Jarigen Arbeid onder de Heidenen in de Transvaal* tells the story of his life's work in the Northern Transvaal. He took up his residence in the Zoutpansbergen in the early days of white settlement, and consequently has a good deal to say on the charges against the farmers.

Some evidence upon Voortrekker native policy is to be gleaned from the works of various hunters and traders who crossed South Africa from end to end and opened up the waste places of the interior. One who will be quoted several times in the succeeding pages is James Chapman, author of two volumes of *Travels in the Interior of South Africa.* Chapman was at one time an official under the government of the Colony of Natal, but threw up his appointment in 1849 to undertake a trading expedition into the interior. For the next few years he travelled through the Western Transvaal, along the Kalahari Desert as far as the lands bordering upon Central Africa, and back to what is now the South West African Protectorate.

In the course of his wanderings he stayed two years among the farmers of Magaliesberg, made the acquaintance of several native chiefs, obtained some influence with Sechele, and met

Livingstone. It is interesting, and significant in view of his later history, that Chapman had no very high opinion of the great explorer's labours as a missionary. He was accompanied upon one hunting expedition by a certain Viljoen, whom the records show to have been one of the field cornets in the district of Marico, and with whom he was on friendly terms.

In many ways Chapman's views on Boer native policy are an echo of those of Livingstone, from whom they may have been imbibed. Some explanation of this antipathy may be found in the following passage,[1] " I spent nearly two years in the Transvaal country, compelled by circumstances to live in a community the society of which was far from congenial to my dispositions and habits, and suffering annoyances and persecutions which rendered my position almost intolerable." Since he testifies to a friendly reception in the country districts of the Transvaal his quarrel probably lay with the government that endeavoured to interfere with his livelihood rather than with individual citizens of the Republic. The fact remains, however, that Chapman was an eyewitness of conditions in the Transvaal in the early fifties of last century, and his opinions deserve serious consideration.

The third class of printed literature comprises the productions of various missionary and philanthropic societies. Each outstanding event in South African history, the Kaffir War of 1834, the Sand River Convention of 1852 and the agitation of 1868 led to a crop of these. Like most pamphlet literature it is hardly trustworthy on matters of fact. The productions of the Aborigines' Protection Society and the Anti-Slavery Society were pieces of special pleading, set out confessedly to establish a particular case. " The following pages," Mr. Chesson began one[2] of them, " are written with two objects, first to show that the Boers send out commandoes to kill the Kaffir men and to enslave the surviving women and children : and secondly, to call attention to the fact that they are building up this institution of slavery." The main interest of pamphlet literature is the light thrown upon contemporary thought and beliefs in England, and the influence that some examples undoubtedly exercised upon the policy of Her Majesty's Government.

[1] *Travels in Southern Africa*, 1, 13. [2] *The Dutch Boers and Slavery*, page 1.

The Blue Books do not require any special comment. A list of those consulted is to be found in the Bibliography, and reference has been made to them where necessary. It is worth noticing that they contain the two full-dress attempts to make out a statement of the "case" against the farmers in the matter of slave dealing. Both in 1848 and 1868 there was an agitation in South Africa for the annexation of the Transvaal territory, and each time the means used to bring pressure to bear upon Her Majesty's Government was the allegation that slavery was in full swing north of the Vaal. Evidence was carefully collected and the most effective statement of the charges sent forward to the Colonial Office.

There are two important printed collections of documents. Most comprehensive and easily the most useful for the earlier history are the two volumes of the *Annals of Natal*. Compiled by John Bird, at one time member of the civil service of the Colony of Natal, they were published in 1888. The collection is an attempt to draw together a complete series of documents illustrating the early history of Natal from the point of view of its makers. There is a thorough compilation of official documents drawn from a great variety of sources, together with copies of documents now in the archives at Pretoria and Capetown. The collection reprints articles that appeared in periodicals of all sorts, Dutch and English, varying between the *Zuid Afrikaansche Tijdschrift* and the *Missionary Register*. It also contains the narratives of many who took part in the Trek, Charl Celliers, Mrs. Steenkamp, W. J. Pretorius and others. Long extracts have been made from the work of Delegorgue, a Frenchman who accompanied Pretorius on his chief expedition against Dingaan.

An earlier compilation is that known as the *Natal Papers*, by John Centilivres Chase, published at Grahamstown in 1842. Theal airily dismissed it in his Catalogue as a book that his own work had rendered out of date, but this is by no means the case. The *Natal Papers* are a sort of scrap book into which Chase, who wrote as a confessed friend of the farmers, crammed all sorts of information on Natal and the Trek that came his way. It was never intended as an historical work, and was published too soon to include a good deal of important material. Nevertheless it remains a unique authority, possessing a value of its own both on

account of its liberal use of newspaper cuttings and the running fire of comment kept up by the author.

Both collections have a common fault. They sometimes omit the source of a document, and it is difficult on occasion to run a particular statement back to its context: Bird, for instance, quotes the "Narratives" of W. J. Pretorius and Charl Celliers without indicating whether they were obtained from a book or periodical or written down especially for his collection. They are, however, a refreshing contrast to the older type of South African historian, who never hinted at any authority at all.

The great mass of material is in manuscript. The two great collections of sources are the Archives at Pretoria and the papers of the London Missionary Society in London. They must be read together. Each consists of documents of a widely different nature, yet they often corroborate one another in a very remarkable way. The Pretoria Archives contain the papers of the short-lived Republic of Natal and the Minutes of its Volksraad. Mr. G. S. Preller has transcribed and published the Volksraad Minutes under the title of *Voortrekker Wetgewing*. The reader will be able to examine them with far less trouble than the present writer. A similar collection of documents and minutes exists for the Republic of Ohrigstad, set up in the eastern Transvaal two years after the fall of Natal, but an extraordinary gap is caused by the absence of any papers for Potchefstroom, where Pretorius' party had settled, before 1849. Missionary letters show that a Volksraad existed, Livingstone and his colleagues had correspondence with Commandants and field cornets, but no trace of their official records can be found.

All the records are incomplete. The Republic of Zoutpansberg, which sprang into existence as a protest against the Grondwet of 1858, whose papers could throw light upon the slavery question, is represented by one document, blackened by fire and rendered illegible by water. To the present only one volume of miscellaneous papers, into which has been jostled every document prior in date to the year 1849, has been catalogued. In dealing with the minutes of Raad meetings and the remaining executive papers the business of research resolves itself into an aimless turning over of leaves in the hope of discovering a useful reference. Only the records of the central government have as yet been bound

and classified. Much that has survived from the archives of the local officials, landdrosts, commandants and field cornets, still lies in heaps upon the floor. A cursory glance suggests that the greater part of these local papers is of a later date than the Voortrekker period. Stray documents that must have been part of the records of a local office sometimes appear among those belonging to the central government.

The Boer archives present the sole possibility of obtaining exact official information upon the real facts in dispute. The Volksraad minutes were very much like those of any similar assembly, but they were not intended for publication, and had no object in view beside that of recording the decisions taken by that body. They show no signs of tampering to adapt them to the susceptibilities of European readers, and record in full the emigrants' petty disputes and internal strife. The papers of the administration are still more valuable. They present the inconsequential medley that gathers round any official post, but are free from the studied impersonality that makes an ordinary government communication so hard to translate into trustworthy evidence. A few almost pathetic attempts at grandiloquence may be found, but the unschooled commandant or field cornet soon lapsed into the homely phrases of his common speech. There are also a number of private and semi-private letters addressed to or by members of the Pretorius family, of whose contents it is sometimes difficult to say whether they were intended for their recipients in their private or their official capacity.

The Boer farmer possessed a strange affection for petitions. Whenever there was a grievance to be righted, or merely an opinion to be aired, down it went on paper. The " memorie " was then hawked round a dozen or so neighbours living within a twenty miles radius of the petitioner's farm, and despatched to the next meeting of the Volksraad. One memorial might call forth a contrary one, and so the game would proceed. Many of these petitions remain, and throw a light upon contemporary opinion all the more valuable since newspapers did not exist.

It is clear, therefore, that the records may be trusted to give a fairly accurate picture of events in the Republics, particularly in any matters that were the subject of controversy among the burghers. The bitter party strife that raged throughout the

Transvaal territory made it difficult for any irregularities to escape detection, and the central authority was constantly bombarded with complaints and accusations against landdrost, commandant and field cornet. On the other hand their incompleteness makes it unsafe to dogmatize. The correspondence on any one subject cannot be tracked to its close, and it would be fatal to argue from absence of comment that a particular institution was unknown. The records are again at a disadvantage when compared with the productions of the missionary and philanthropic societies in that they were written without any thought of preparing a " case." No one ever prepared an official defence of the farmers. They were peculiarly unskilled in the arts of controversy—witness President Pretorius and State Secretary Proes in the Bloemhof Arbitration. On the rare occasions when they were confronted by Livingstone or Inglis in person the Boer officials contented themselves with vague blustering denials.

The other great source of manuscript material for the period of the Trek is to be found in the carefully preserved records of the London Missionary Society. These gain an added value since in 1835 the Directors passed a resolution requiring all members to submit an annual report of the work done on each station. All the correspondence has been preserved, and is arranged under the double classification of place and year. Much, of course, is irrelevant to the present subject. There is a good deal of station gossip, mission statistics and records of work and of squabbles with colleagues, but the Boers were never very far away, and from time to time light is thrown upon some obscure point in the history of the farmers. Once or twice an incident crops up which has figured in the Boer records, and in one or two cases the missionaries have preserved a copy of an official document whose Dutch original has perished.

The general tone of the correspondence, almost without exception, is hostile to the farmers. This was only to be expected. One important feature deserves notice. While the older men who had been on the spot before the Trek were uncompromising in their opposition to the farmers, the later comers, though never very friendly, were much less antagonistic until after 1852. The London records have been of considerable value as providing the only external source for testing and checking the Boer papers.

They are of no great value to the Society, and no attempt at cataloguing has been made. Hence a good deal of irrelevant matter has to be digested in the course of the enquiry, but the letters were classified when originally received and it is comparatively easy to keep the field of research within reasonable bounds.

Among miscellaneous points that require some notice is the spelling of proper names, native names in particular. In the Dutch records, for instance, "Segela"[1] and "Segelie" are used to describe the chief with whom Livingstone laboured. "Sechele" and "Sechellie" appear in contemporary English books, while Theal was even inconsistent with himself, rendering the name "Setyeli" in one volume of his *History*, and "Setsheli" in the next. I am informed that the latter is the form nearest to the original, provided that the tongue be furrowed and swept from left to right along the back of the teeth while the name is being pronounced!

Authorities state that it is impossible to give a canon for the spelling of Bantu names. In a good many cases the spellings given by unpractised European writers cannot be identified with any known native name. The plan here followed has been to give either the spelling which most nearly suggests the native original, or that which is most common in English books. No new variant has been created.

In the case of European names there is little difficulty. The chief variations are to be found in the Dutch letters and records, and even here it is comparatively easy to detect the modern form of the name. If the person in question is of any importance the usual version is given. Livingstone is thus spelled, instead of the "Levenstone" of a Boer minute book, or the "Livingston" which was actually his own method of writing his name throughout the period under discusion. Similarly, the modern spellings of Pietermaritzburg and Potchefstroom are followed instead of the variants[2] of contemporary spelling.

The word "Kaffir" is sometimes resented by friends of the native peoples. By some philologists it is restricted to mean

[1] It should be remembered that the Dutch "g" is sounded like "ch" in the Scots word "loch."

[2] The most surprising form of the latter name is "Potcaptrum," which appears in one of the Blue Books.

only the AmaXosa and kindred tribes of the eastern frontier of Cape Colony. The name was used by the farmers (as commonly by South Africans at the present day) as a generic term to describe any or all of the so-called " Bantu " tribes of South Africa, and was thus synonymous with the ordinary use of the English word " native." This meaning has been retained, and the words " native " and " Kaffir " have been used indiscriminately. When the AmaXosa in particular are intended they are referred to by that name.

The letter R. prefixed to a reference number denotes that the document in question is to be found in the Pretoria Archives among the papers belonging to the Executive or " Regering " *e.g.*, R. 31/56, while T. refers to the volumes belonging to the legislature, *e.g.*, Vol. T.2/25, p. 356. The letters L.M.S. before a reference mean that the letter in question is to be found amongst the papers of the London Missionary Society. The name of the author, the mission station and the year are also given, *e.g.*, L.M.S., Ashton, Kuruman, 1850. Other books are quoted in the usual way.

The unit of money was the Rix-dollar (abbreviated Rd.), a relic of the days of the Netherlands East India Company at the Cape, and reckoned at this time as worth 1/6.

CHAPTER I.

PRELIMINARIES OF THE GREAT TREK.

The early years of the Nineteenth Century are crucial in the history of South Africa. When the British re-occupied the Cape in 1806 they were making sure of the fortress that held the way to India, attached to which was a vague hinterland of which little was known and for which less was cared. Soon afterwards expansion began and the years that followed saw the distribution of white and black in very much the same areas that each holds at present. The European districts to be known later as Natal, the Transvaal and the Orange Free State were each established before 1850, while the native territories of Basutoland, Zululand, Bechuanaland, Swaziland and the Transkei date back to the great chiefs and tribal groups of the same period. Even disputes between the two European races failed to disturb the balance of occupation, and geographically, if not politically, the territorial distribution of native and European races is much what it was seventy or eighty years ago.

At the beginning of the century the whites occupied a fairly compact area with its nucleus at the old trading station of Good Hope in the extreme south west corner of the continent. Thence they spread along the valleys that border the sea coast, until the settlement had thrown its furthest outposts to the Great Fish River. To the north of Graaff Reinet and east of the Fish River the country was peopled, thickly or thinly according to the nature of the soil, by various native tribes.

Fifty years later, a great change had come over the scene. White communities were to be found south of the Tugela in the coastal plain of Natal, and again on the plateaux north of the Orange and Vaal, while the AmaXosa tribes were being pushed back from behind the Fish River. In the spaces between the European communities, in the Drakensbergen and Zoutpansbergen, and on the edge of the Kalahari Desert, were the great

native tribes, Zulu, Basuto, Swazi, and so on, whose descendants still maintain a degree of social and economic, if not of political freedom.

The intrusion of the white races into the wide spaces of the interior was not altogether a matter of sheer brigandage. The earlier European immigrants into the plains that lay beyond the Orange and Vaal were struck by a strange absence of human life. The land was fertile, there were still traces that it had once carried a large population, but it lay desolate. This phenomenon dictated the whole history of the Trek, for it was only the circumstance that land was available for settlement that led the emigrant farmers to turn their backs upon the Colony.

The break up of the old order of things began with the Zulu tribe. Dingiswayo in the closing years of the Eighteenth Century, followed by Tshaka and Dingaan in the next, set himself deliberately to establish a military power. The whole nation was organized upon a military basis, weapons and tactics were improved, and the machine launched ruthlessly at the neighbouring tribes. Defeat meant extinction or enslavement, and the country was systematically laid waste between the Tugela and the Umzimvubu.

The devastation wrought by the Zulu extended beyond the Drakensbergen. An attack upon the Amangwane in 1822 drove them upon the Amahlubi and led to portion of that tribe fleeing across the mountains and falling upon the Batlokua, who, under Sikonyela and his mother, MaNtatisi, lived in the neighbourhood of the present town of Harrismith. The Batlokua in their turn attacked the Bafokeng, and raged down the plateau of the Free State. Their reputation went before them, and even in the far Cape Colony men heard tell of the "Mantatee horde." Robert Moffat, London Missionary at Kuruman on the edge of the desert, heard the rumour[1] of their coming. "It was said that a mighty woman, of the name of Mantatee, was at the head of an invincible army, numerous as locusts, carrying devastation and ruin wherever she went; that she nourished the army with her own milk, sent out hornets before it, and, in one word, was laying the world desolate."

[1] *Southern Africa*, p. 340.

The Batlokua were driven back from Kuruman by the Griqua, whose muskets turned the issue of the day, and re-entered the Free State. Between the Orange and the Vaal all was confusion. The flight of one tribe from a conqueror displaced others and set them out upon a reckless career, their courage reinforced by sheer panic. Sometimes a tribe split up into two or three fragments that each continued the work of destruction. Sometimes two fugitive clans coalesced to increase their power of destruction. Native tradition maintains that it was not uncommon for seed to be sown by one tribe, the grain reaped by another, and the harvest enjoyed by a third. This period, known as the " Lifaqane " or time of the migrations, left its mark ineffaceably upon the history of South Africa.

The cost in human life is incredible. Mr. Ellenberger, with much circumstantial appearance of accuracy, arrives[1] at a figure of 300,000 for the number of those eaten by cannibals alone, but much more slaughter was done by the various native raiders—Amahlubi of Pakadita, Amangwane of Matuoane, Batlokua of MaNtatisi, Matabele of Umzilikazi, Amazulu of Tshaka and Dingaan, and Griquas and Korannas from the west—who laid waste the country. Many more must have perished from famine and wild beasts, and many thousands fled to the Colony to take service with the white farmers.

In much the same way the territory across the Vaal was laid waste by Umzilikazi and his Matabele. This chief was a Zulu captain who in 1826 angered Tshaka and fled to the north. After wandering about and plundering the country within the bend of the Limpopo he finally established himself near its source at Mosega in 1835. Between his new headquarters and the Zulu country he maintained a belt of devastated land, and from Mosega expeditions were sent out in all directions, some of which penetrated far into the country to the north of the Limpopo. He himself led an expedition against Sikonyela, and yet another in 1831 against the Basuto at Thaba Bosigo. The latter foray was repulsed, but Moshesh gave evidence of that political cunning that was to make him the most powerful chief in Southern Africa. The Matabele travelled without commissariat, and defeat meant starvation. Moshesh realised the danger of an enemy made

[1] *History of the Basuto*, p 225.

desperate, and sent them a present of grain, which might possibly earn their gratitude, and most certainly ensured their departure.

The effect of the Lifaqane upon South Africa was twofold. In the first place it destroyed many tribes and depopulated large stretches of country. Wide areas were left available for European settlement, and few tribes survived to dispute their entrance into the land. In the second it provided opportunity to chieftains, hitherto insignificant, to build up a large personal following out of the wreckage of various clans. Of these adventurers Moshesh was easily the most important. It is significant that whereas the earliest European immigrants met with serious difficulty only from Umzilikazi and Dingaan, from 1840 onward the various Trekker states were in constant conflict, not only with Moshesh, but also with Sechele, Sekwati, Sekukuni and a host of smaller parvenus.

The geographical distribution of the tribes was a more obvious outcome of the Lifaqane. When the farmers first penetrated to the inland plateau, or passed thence through the Qathlamba to the sea, they found large tracts of land without inhabitant. In Natal Dingaan, successor to Tshaka, had his kraals near the headwaters of the Umfolosi, but south of the Tugela the country lay desolate as far as the Umzimvubu. In the Orange Free State the great plain was vacant, and the native population had been reduced to a few broken tribes which found a precarious living among the foothills of the mountains. Moroka had a stronghold at Thabanchu, where he had just received a Wesleyan missionary, Moshesh had recently begun his career of consolidation at Thaba Bosigo, and Sikonyela with his Batlokua had found a resting place in his old lands to the northward.

In the territory across the Vaal Umzilikazi had his kraal at Mosega, and a few fragments of tribes had taken refuge in the desert to the west, where the London Missionary Society had a station at Kuruman. A few more inhabited the Zoutpansbergen and Drakensbergen to the north and east, or lived in the Low Country beyond. In the extreme southwest of the Transvaal territory reigned Sobhuza, founder of the Swazi nation. The whole of the centre of the Transvaal lay waste, the result of Umzilikazi's policy of extermination.

This was the scene upon which the white population was to enter in the years following 1836. It remains to consider the character of the immigrants. The Europeans at the Cape were for the most part of a Low German stock, descended from servants of the Netherlands East India Company who took their discharge in South Africa and settled down to a farmer's life. Mingled with these were other strains : some were descendants of religious refugees who had fled from France towards the close of the Seventeenth Century, while others looked back to a German ancestry. The work of consolidation soon began, and by the beginning of the Nineteenth Century the rural population of South Africa had become a homogeneous nation. English settlement was hardly attempted before 1820, and by the beginning of the Trek the English immigrants were only just beginning to settle down in the Eastern Province. One or two English—or rather, Scottish—names are to be found in Trekker records, but the proportion is negligible.

The earliest farmers at the Cape had been wheat growers, placed there to supply food for the fleets, but an unsympathetic economic policy that subordinated the whole life of the colonist to the interests of the Company led to expansion beyond the Peninsula. Absence of labour, the wide area available, and the nature of the soil, caused agriculture to be abandoned in favour of cattle raising. The new occupation scattered the population yet more thinly over the land. As early as 1700 thirst for travel and exploration, and fear of being cramped by the view of his neighbour's camp fire, drove the South African farmer to penetrate the mountains that shut him off from the Karroo. From that time onward the constant expansion of the pastoral population, followed at some distance by settled government, proceeded without check.

The century of expansion that followed 1700 called for distinct qualities in the pioneers, and developed characteristics in their descendants which more settled conditions have not yet eradicated. Chief among these is what some have called the "*trekgees*" or trekking spirit, a restless adventurousness which led the frontier farmer to fare forth perpetually into the unknown.

The life called for complete self-reliance. The nearest neighbour was many miles distant, the nearest representative of the

law several days journey away in the mud-daubed huts of some rural metropolis like Graaff Reinet. The farmer was thrown back upon his own resources for food, clothing, protection and even religious comfort, without assistance from communal organization, and without the civilizing influences of mutual intercourse. It is small wonder that he developed a characteristic intractability that sometimes justified those who charged him with being harsh, unreasonable, and refractory.

The frontier farmer's characteristic self-sufficiency resulted in profound suspicion and distrust of all settled government. Towards the end of the Netherlands East India Company's rule the eastern districts were in a chronic state of disaffection, flaming at times into open revolt. They had already thrown off the yoke of Cape Town when the British first landed in 1795, and the authorities found frequent cause for perturbation in the years to come. The seeds of character that were then sown bore fruit beyond the borders of the Colony, and government after government failed in the independent Republics through the sheer disregard of their subjects. This is the only explanation of those breakdowns of civil government that more than once formed the pretext for annexation by Great Britain.

While the frontier farmers pushed steadily eastward, the Bantu tribes, who first make their appearance in Central Africa, were moving along the coastal plain to meet them. The first conflict took place towards the end of the Eighteenth Century in the wooded country beyond the Kei and Fish rivers. Years of alternate cattle lifting and punitive expeditions followed. Frontiers are notorious for reciprocal forays, and the " Kaffirs ", as the Europeans called them, whose sole wealth was cattle, and whose laws of morality did not apply to strangers, could not withstand the temptation afforded by the scattered and unprotected herds of the farmers. At the same time it is undeniable that cattle stealing was not confined to one side, and cases occurred in which the known thieving habits of the Kaffirs were used as an excuse for reprisals that were not to be distinguished from barefaced robbery.

The farmers clamoured for protection against the native, and complained that the administration at Cape Town cared nothing for what went on on the frontier. But the strategic problem was

insoluble, and adequate garrisoning of the Eastern Border was out of the question for a colony whose revenue did not meet its expenses. The bankrupt Netherlands East India Company could not, and the economical English taxpayer would not, make themselves responsible for the defence of people who refused to remain within reasonable bounds.

More than once the frontier farmers took the law into their own hands, organized commandos and proceeded to extract retribution from the marauding native. Once Maynier, Company's landdrost at Graaff Reinet, found himself quietly blockaded in his own drostdy, as a protest against what his neighbours considered a feebly negrophile policy. It is significant that when General Janssens fell back from Cape Town in 1806 upon the districts of the interior he found it impossible to sting the inhabitants into striking a single blow against the British re-occupation of the Cape.

Almost coincident with the British occupation was the coming of the London Missionary Society, the first of whose emissaries was a Hollander named van der Kemp. In the disputes that followed their arrival, the missionaries claimed to exercise, and were commonly believed to have achieved, the determining voice in the native policy of the country. They certainly provided the only outside source of information upon colonial affairs that was available for authorities in Great Britain. Hence the origin of a long dispute between missionary and colonist whose echoes still serve to enliven the election oratory of South Africa.

The missionary dispute was not the only cause of discontent upon the frontier. The personal equation also played its part. Autocratic government from Cape Town can have been little hardship to a generation which had grown up during the death agony of the Netherlands East India Company. It was probably of more moment, especially when things went wrong, that the higher officials were now members of an alien race, and one not distinguished at that time for cosmopolitanism.

There are some who find in the land question a cause of discontent more acute than missionary policy or alien domination. The arrival of the British found easily the greater part of the land of the colony held under the " loan-place " system. Under this all the formalities required of a prospective landowner were

to set up his beacon at a suitable spot and notify the local authority. He might then claim the land for a radius of half-an-hour's walk round the beacon, in return for a fee of some two or three pounds a year. The " loan " could be resumed at the discretion of the Government, but in practice the tenant was seldom disturbed. It was all very vague and casual, but it meant that land could be had for nothing, and anyone might set up for himself.

The effects of the system were far-reaching. There was no subdivision of farms. No family was rooted to any particular spot, and the younger sons applied for fresh grants as soon as they approached manhood and married. One farm might be abandoned in favour of another without much searching of heart. The Colony had been expanding eastward since the first grant of land in 1657 and the Great Trek itself was only a phase in the age-long process.

The English authorities, their sense of legal propriety shocked by the casualness of the South African system, attempted to introduce reforms. The objections adduced against the old method were obvious enough. There was no security of tenure, no certainty of boundaries, no encouragement for the improver, nothing to prevent interminable litigation on the part of the unscrupulous. These objections were undoubtedly justified, but it must be remembered that the so-called " improvements " on the cattle ranches—for such they were—were nothing more than a few mud huts, and a kraal or two with loose stone walls ; the country was sparsely populated and little boundary trouble was to be expected. So long as land was to be had for the asking, no landgrabber or speculator would gain much profit from the removal of his neighbour's landmark. The difficulties to which the authorities looked forward were those of the future rather than of the time being, and perhaps they deserve credit for attempting to forestall them.

Two enactments disturbed the whole social order of the frontier. In 1812 Cradock attempted to substitute for the old " loan-place " a system of surveyed quit-rent farms whose tenure was practically freehold. In 1831, Cole, acting in accordance with the most advanced economic thought of the time, announced that for the future Crown Lands—that is, the vacant spaces of

Africa—would be sold by auction instead of being granted out indiscriminately. Both reforms would be approved by the economist, but they upset the frontiersman's conception of the Universe. Beyond the Orange vacant land, to be had without Government fee or surveyor's diagram, beckoned him on, and long before the Sixth Kaffir War there were families living in the Griqua territory round Philippolis, and many more had decided to trek.

By nature, therefore, the frontier farmer was restless and refractory, and he had been encouraged in his habits of mind by the circumstances of his tenure. His mode of existence—moving with his cattle from place to place in search of pasture—made trekking a commonplace of daily life. Long hunting expeditions were taken into the interior, and a manner of living indulged in by Europeans only as an incident of a summer holiday was the normal routine. Houses on the frontier were not the luxurious homesteads of European tradition or of the Western Province. Mud huts, hastily run up and abandoned without regret, they can have presented few advantages over the moving waggon.

It has been easy to show that the Trek was a possible phenomenon in the circumstances of the frontier. What were the grievances that made it a matter of practical politics? Cloete, apparently following Retief's famous manifesto, puts down the causes as three—each of them significantly connected with questions of colour—the Hottentot question, the Slave question and the Kaffir question. If it be remembered that the causes he sets down were proximate rather than original, there is no reason to dispute his arrangement.

Both parties to the dispute that raged around the Great Trek were agreed that it was caused in the end by native policy. Heads of parties setting out on trek published manifestos which invariably complained of the absence of security on the frontier. On the other hand the missionaries claimed, and their supporters still claim, that the Trek was the direct outcome of efforts to improve the lot of the Hottentot and native and to safeguard them from exploitation and pillage.

That which Cloete called the Slave question needs little notice here.[1] It certainly caused widespread irritation, but the farmers

[1] For a contrary view see Professor Macmillan's treatment in his *Cape Colour Problem*, pp. 81 and 245.

of the eastern districts, from which the bulk of the trekkers were derived, were not slave holders to any extent. It must be conceded that the manner in which the slaves were released was distinctly irritating to their legitimate owners, while the shock to vested interests in the failure of the compensation to provide for the full value of the slaves was a serious blow to all that Government stands to preserve. At the same time it is useless to say with Theal that slavery would have come to an end without outside interference. Professor Hattersley has shown that the Cape of Good Hope Philanthropic Society, which alone made any attempt to cope with the problem, existed almost entirely upon a Government grant and subscriptions from oversea.

It must be remembered too that the whole brunt of the compensation vote was borne by the British taxpayer, while the four years " apprenticeship " of the freed slaves to their former masters ought to have done much to mitigate the violence of the change. A good deal of the difficulty arose out of the comparative insignificance of the slave question in the Cape Colony, which contained not more than one twelfth of the total number of slaves in the British Empire. From the very beginning the regulations had been concerned far more with the West Indies than South Africa, and the famous enactment of 1830 which caused so much unrest at the Cape was, in fact, a Trinidad ordinance.

The Hottentot question was more serious. When Europeans first settled at the Cape they, together with a few Bushmen, had formed the only population. In course of time the sale of their cattle to white men, exclusion from their usual pasturage, the employment of many by the farmers and, above all, the havoc wrought by several epidemics of smallpox broke up their tribal system. They were thus reduced to irresponsible groups picking up a living when and how they could. The farmers complained that the vagrant Hottentot was a serious danger, and that the floating population of de-tribalized nomads refused to labour and preferred to exist by stocklifting and petty theft.

The Dutch courts had originally declined to exercise jurisdiction except when a white man was involved, but in the early days of the British occupation it was no longer possible to ignore the problem. From 1809 onwards a succession of proclamations endeavoured to check vagrancy and regulate the employment of

Hottentots by farmers. Other enactments arranged for the " apprenticeship " of Hottentot children. Something of the sort seems clearly to have been necessary, but missionaries objected that since the Hottentot was not allowed to hold land in the Colony these regulations put him at the mercy of his farmer employer and reduced him to something very near economic slavery. Then opened the floodgates of acrimonious discussion, and the colonists retorted in kind. Sweeping charges of inefficiency, indiscipline and even worse were brought against the mission stations in the country and particularly against the London Society's settlement at Bethelsdorp. It was complained that these stations were the refuge of some of the worst scoundrels in the country, and that they simply formed places of sanctuary for the criminal population. There seems to have been only too much justification for some of these charges, particularly under the indulgent rule of Dr. van der Kemp, but it must not be forgotten that there was another side to the story.

Missionaries complained that landdrosts and field cornets regarded a mission station in their neighbourhood as a convenient source of compulsory labour. The native servants of farmers were liable to a sort of *corvée*, but their masters invariably grumbled at losing their services, and the mission stations probably came in for more than their fair share. To this the farmers replied that the harbouring of runaways at mission stations left them with too few servants even to carry on their own work !

In 1828, as a result of " philanthropist " agitation, the so-called Fiftieth Ordinance was passed, which released Hottentots from all laws that enforced discrimination on account of colour, such as compulsory government labour and restriction upon their purchase of land. On the other hand, it repeated the regulations for properly executed contracts between Hottentot servants and their white masters. The result of the Ordinance, so the famers maintained, was a renewal of all the evils of Hottentot vagrancy. The latter are said to have squatted near farms and in the neighbourhood of villages, working occasionally to earn enough money to procure supplies of cheap spirit, and supplying themselves with meat by means of petty thefts upon the farmers' herds. On the other hand the missionaries maintained that the reason for the

farmers' opposition was that they were now no longer assisted by law to keep a grip upon a supply of cheap labour.

The Kaffir question was the crucial problem of Cape politics for at least half of the Nineteenth Century, and in spite of ceaseless experiment the solution came about in the end rather as a result of the increasing prosperity of the colony, and the race suicide of the AmaXosa, than of the various schemes put forward to achieve it. The question is easily stated. The Kaffirs were a pastoral race, semi-nomadic in their habits, whose wealth of cattle made necessary a vast area of pasture. Natural increase both of families and herds, and the exhaustion of the soil by crude methods of farming, drove them on continually. When they came in contact with the Europeans they found the straggling, inadequately guarded herds an easy prey. The natives then set themselves by plunder and infiltration to drive the whites back on the Cape. As a policy their action was only half conscious, and would have been practised almost automatically upon any nation,[1] white or black, that barred the way.

On their side the whites found themselves at the mercy of the Kaffirs, and quite unable to defend their cattle against ceaseless plunder. If they adopted the obvious remedy and fell back from the frontier, the natives merely crossed the Fish River, settled in the vacant territory, and began the process again. The problem was clear enough: what solution was it possible to propound?

The frontier farmer spoke glibly of "adequate protection," and "teaching the Kaffir a lesson," but the policy was easier to prescribe than to perform. The real difficulty, that lay at the the root of the whole native problem, was that the Cape settlement, from the day of its foundation to the day that it received responsible government, did not pay its way. Commercial and strategic motives might reconcile a European nation to a certain amount of expenditure for the defence of the fortress of Good Hope, but no government could or would tax its European subjects in order to protect the straggling herds of the frontier farmer. Strategically the position of the latter in face of his active foe was fundamentally unsound, and it would have required "all the King's

[1] *c.f.*, the depredations of Tshaka.

horses and all the King's men " to afford anything like " reasonable protection."

The solution that commended itself to swashbucklers of the type of van Jaarsveld was the inevitable commando, let loose to carry indiscriminate reprisal into the heart of Kaffir-land. This, the European administrations at Cape Town usually discountenanced, and on the whole they must be accounted right. Putting aside the question of the morality of such a proceeding, the experience of the farming communities in the Transvaal and Free State in the years after the Trek was that commandos of this sort invariably precipitated a graver conflict. The little group of Europeans straightway found itself involved in conflict with the whole Kaffir nation. The temporary advantage was many times outweighed by the bitterness and intensity added to the race conflict.

In the Cape numerous expedients were attempted by the authorities. In 1812 Sir John Cradock drove the Kaffirs back from the Zuurveld, upon which they had squatted, and penned them beyond the Fish River. From behind this boundary they plundered as before, and in 1817 Lord Charles Somerset attempted a new solution. This was to recognize Gaika as paramount chief of the border tribes, and to make him accept responsibility for the restoration of stolen cattle. The system worked moderately well for a time, but with the inevitable result that the British Government found itself bound to interfere on behalf of its protegé when he was attacked and defeated by his rival Ndhlambi. After the war of 1818–9 Lord Charles persuaded the restored Gaika to surrender the stretch of country between the Fish and Keiskamma Rivers as a belt of " Neutral Territory." The idea was to keep this stretch vacant and to hold it down by forts and frequent military patrols, which ought at least to be able to detect the transport of stolen cattle across the neutral zone.

The scheme was soon weakened by the grant of permission to favoured clans to settle upon the ceded territory, with the inevitable result that cattle stealing flourished as before. In 1833 Maqomo and Tyali, sons of Gaika, were driven out of the country as a punishment for their fall from grace, and the trouble of the Frontier came to a head in the Kaffir War of 1834–5, which laid waste an enormous tract of the Colony.

After some preliminary fumbling, Governor Sir Benjamin D'Urban decided to annex a large stretch of native territory as far as the Kei River, and to subject the tribes living there to British administration. There was now some prospect of a solution, but D'Urban's extraordinary secretiveness led to its undoing. Glenelg, Secretary of State for the Colonies, has incurred a considerable odium on account of his policy and the unfortunate despatch of 1835, but it is only fair to point out that his sole information at this critical time came from Stockenstrom and the missionary section. Philip himself was anxious to retain the new Province, but his long campaign against the local officials had led to a profound distrust in Downing Street. The result was the official reversal of the D'Urban policy and the appointment of Andries Stockenstrom as Lieutenant-Governor of the Eastern Districts.

Whatever the motives of Sir Andries' policy as Lieutenant-Governor it certainly followed the principles of Philip and the missionary group, while his personality proved a fresh source of irritation to the frontier farmers. The so-called " reprisals system " of punishing cattle theft was officially condemned, and the farmers found themselves doomed, without possibility of protection or hope of revenge, to continual raiding from across the Border. Even anarchy seemed preferable to the government they possessed.

The frontier farmer was accustomed to frequent changes of habitation, and was not greatly attached to any one spot. Much of the year was spent on trek. Many had contemplated migration, even before 1834, and the obvious remedy that suggested itself to those who had suffered by the Sixth Kaffir War was to go on trek once more, and pass beyond the influence of the administration that they disliked and despised.

CHAPTER II.

ON TREK.

THE migration that we call the Great Trek was not a venture into absolutely unknown territory. Hunting expeditions had gained some knowledge of the interior, and more than one trip had been made with the specific object of investigating the possibilities of settlement. Modern Damaraland, the present Free State and Natal were explored, and the territory south of the Tugela that had been laid waste by the Zulu incursions. The report on the interior was satisfactory, and several large groups decided to remove.

Before the main bodies left the Colony a small party under Louis Trichardt and J. van Rensburg journeyed northward, and, according to some accounts, reached the district now known as Zoutpansberg. The two leaders quarrelled, and finding the country uninhabited decided each to go his own way. Chase, on what authority it is hard to say, fixes this as having taken place on the banks of a large river "between 26° and 27° S.," which would of course have been the Vaal. Trichardt moved in the direction of Delagoa Bay, and fever and the privations of the journey accounted for all but a small remnant of his party. Of the fate of van Rensburg nothing definite is known, save that the whole community was exterminated by a native tribe.

There are two versions as to the author of the massacre. The unfortunate emigrants had settled within striking distance of Umzilikazi, and it is possible that he, ever jealous of a possible rival, ordered their destruction. This is the story, apparently, that was accepted by the Boers who settled later in the Transvaal. Some years later a rumour reached them that two white children were still in the hands of Umzilikazi, detained as prisoners at his kraal. The Volksraad Minutes[1] show that there was some talk of an expedition to effect a rescue, though nothing seems to have been done. Moffat, however, says[2] that they were two

[1] Volksraad of Andries Ohrigstad : Minutes for 19 March, 1846.

[2] *Southern Africa and L.M.S.*

Griqua children who had been carried off in a Matabele raid west of the Vaal. One of them was released by Umzilikazi at his intercession. Of van Rensburg's expedition there seem to have been no survivors. The other story,[1] based on the log of the *Comet*, the vessel that rescued the survivors of Trichardt's party from Delagoa Bay, attributed the murder to Sochangan, a tributary of Dingaan, who raided the Eastern Transvaal.

The first large body of migrant farmers left the Colony in 1836, under the leadership of Andries Hendrik Potgieter and Gerrit Maritz. The route they followed was dictated by nature on the one hand, and the Kaffirs on the other. To the north lay the dry lands that lead up to the Kalahari Desert, while to the east the country, however attractive, was the home of the warlike AmaXosa, to escape from whom was the chief motive of the Trek. They moved, therefore, in a north-easterly direction, forded the Orange near its southernmost bend and travelled slowly up the great central plain, which they found destitute of population. Their first prolonged stay was made at Thabanchu in the foothills of the Drakensbergen, where the Barolong chief Moroka, with whom was a Wesleyan missionary, Archbell, received them well, and allowed them to rest and pasture their cattle.

The leaders of the migration had no wish for close contact with native tribes and the greater part of the body moved north once more. This time they were in scattered parties, spread out over the open country in search of pasture. The leading group had just crossed the Valsch River near the site of the present town of Kroonstad, and was approaching the Vaal, when Umzilikazi once more was made aware of the approach of strangers. The first straggling parties were attacked and exterminated, but the remainder received a hasty warning. They drew their waggons into a circle, crammed thorn bushes into the spaces, and awaited the attack.

Charl Celliers' description[2] of the fight which followed is a commonplace of South African history, and there is no need to reproduce it here. In the end the Matabele drew off, leaving a large number of dead on the ground around the laager. In their retreat they carried off the whole of the farmers' livestock, which had, perforce, been left ouside the fortification. Help

[1] *Natal Papers.* [2] Bird: *Annals of Natal*, I. 238

came from Moroka and the emigrants fell back upon Thabanchu, suffering great privations, to find there the rest of their party with the new arrivals. It is to the credit of Moroka that he treated the stricken refugees with as much consideration as when first they visited him.

An attempt was now made to establish some sort of government. A supreme board or council of seven "Heads" with legislative and judicial powers was appointed by a general meeting of all the emigrants, which determined further on a punitive expedition against Umzilikazi.

The farmers had not left the Colony unobserved. They had many enemies among those with the welfare of the native at heart, and an excellent example of the way in which these took every opportunity of attacking them appears in a despatch[1] of Lord Glenelg dated May 9, 1838, to the Governor at the Cape. It calls his attention to "a passage in the statement from Mr. Barend Rudolph, of Olifants Hoek . . . Mr. Rudolph remarks that the farmers were living in amity with the neighbouring natives, yet that a body of 500 of them was moving off to bring Umzilikazi to a reckoning. "If he will agree to their terms, well and good, if not, they destroy his power and prevent his doing further mischief."

Since this was the only information at his disposal it is hardly surprising that the Secretary of State anxiously requested the Governor to do all that he could to protect Umzilikazi from his dangerous and irresponsible neighbours.

Who this Mr. Barend Rudolph was, and what other information he had to give, is not easy to establish. It is possible, though the paucity of surnames in South Africa renders an assumption of this sort distinctly precarious, that this Mr. Barend Rudolph may be identified with Chase's Bernard Roedolf. If this be true, there is evidence that he changed his opinion of the Trek. Chase tells the story of the latter in the *Natal Papers*. He set out in May, 1837, with the intention of discouraging certain of his relations from continuing the expedition and with hopes of persuading them to return. He was so impressed, however, with what he found, that he was himself converted, and later abandoned his own home in the Colony to settle in Natal.

[1] Bird: *Annals of Natal*, I. 393.

But whoever Mr. Barend Rudolph may have been the chief danger of his evidence lay in its literal truth. The Boers were indeed "living in amity with the surrounding natives," but Umzilikazi, whom they wished to "bring to a reckoning," was not one of their neighbours, and missionary evidence shows him to have been the plague of all, natives and white men alike.

The punitive expedition against the Matabele advanced upon Mosega from the deserts of the west, by way of the Kuruman road, and reached Umzilikazi's town without being observed. When a force came out to meet them their superior mobility as mounted men enabled the farmers to advance within short range. Dismounting to fire into the closely packed mass of Matabele warriors they then rode off to a safe distance to reload their clumsy weapons. Thus, without incurring any casualities, they inflicted heavy loss upon their enemies, and put them to flight. Though their captures of cattle were not remarkable and the campaign had no decisive action, they warned Umzilikazi that interference with white men would not be allowed to go unpunished.

Meanwhile more and more farmers were leaving the Colony. Among them was Pieter Retief, a man of somewhat better education and rather more standing than any of the other leaders. He had been a Commandant and had held some government contracts under the British administration, but his financial ventures[1] proved unsuccessful. Partly on account of his higher standing, and being as yet not identified with the party squabbles that raged in the camp, he was elected head of the emigrants, with the titles of Commandant General and Governor. At a meeting held on the banks of the Vet River near the site of the town of Winburg a series of resolutions[2] was passed, nine in number, whose object was to bind the emigrants more closely together.

In the very forefront of the "Nine Resolutions" stands one that is of considerable importance from the point of view of native policy. By the first article every member of the "maatschappij" was required to take an oath formally disowning all English missionary societies. This is the first written evidence to native policy among the Trekkers, and their enemies may justly claim that it has an ominous significance. It appears to confirm at

[1] His most successful speculation was a corner in wheat during a time of scarcity in the Eastern Province. *See* Cory II. 75.
[2] R. 10/37. 6 June, 1837.

the very outset all those charges that had been laid to their account in the Cape Colony, and which figured later in the indictment prepared against them after they had established themselves in the Transvaal.

Mr. Preller holds that the renunciation refers only to the London Missionary Society, but there is no ground for this restriction in the Articles themselves. As the clause stands its language embraces English missionary societies in general, and can only be interpreted to imply a deadly enmity to all that they represented. At the same time it is possible to hold a view of its origin that is not wholly unfavourable to the Boers. In all probability this particular clause may be traced back to a dispute among the Trekkers as to whether Mr. Archbell, the Wesleyan missionary, or Charl Celliers, one of their own number, should be the accredited " chaplain " to the Trek. The London Society had indeed taken the lead in the agitation against the farmers in the Colony, and all missionaries had incurred suspicion as a result. The party opposed to Archbell took advantage of the deep-seated prejudice against missionaries to secure the passing of the clause. He was thus automatically barred from any official connection with the Trek.

This interpretation seems to be borne out by the relations of the farmers with other missionaries. They worked smoothly enough with Americans and Wesleyans, and went to breakfast with Mr. Owen of the Church Missionary Society. In the early days of the Transvaal there was no apparent breach even with the London missionaries at Kuruman and its out-stations. The troubles with Livingstone, Edwards and Inglis were of later growth.

In any case the evidence of the Resolution, whatever its origin, is negative. For constructive policy the actions rather than the documents of the Trekkers must be searched. One scrap of written evidence of the intentions of Retief himself remains. Before he left the Colony a letter appeared in the *Grahamstown Journal* over his signature, summarizing his reasons for going on trek. It is somewhat hackneyed as an historical source, and has been quoted religiously by each historian of the period. But though its phrases smack too much of the ponderous English of the early Nineteenth Century, and point at the very least to

extensive adaptation on the part of the editor, the manifesto does at least contain a statement of principles of policy.

"We solemnly declare," runs the sixth paragraph,[1] "that we leave this country with a desire to enjoy a quieter life than we have hitherto had: we will not molest any people, nor deprive them of the smallest property, but if attacked we shall consider ourselves fully justified in defending our persons and effects to the utmost of our ability against every enemy."

Retief's policy, therefore, was ostensibly one of peace and friendly relations with the natives, and after his election he entered into treaties with the principal chiefs of the interior—Moroka, Moshesh, Towana and Sikonyela.[2] All of these lived among the mountains to the east, a scrap of evidence to the depopulation of the central plateau. The emigrants then proceeded to scatter themselves throughout the vacant area along the banks of the rivers to which they gave the names of Modder, Vet and Sand.

No trace remains of the treaties then concluded, but it is not difficult to conjecture their chief provisions. Others that have survived show that there was a sort of "common form" to which all similar documents tended to approximate. After the formal preamble comes an undertaking on the part of each signatory to remain at peace with the other. The second clause usually grants permission to the farmers to settle in a given district, in return for some consideration—usually a number of cattle or horses. Details changed with each negotiation, but the general outline was nearly always the same. Sometimes the cautious farmers obtained and appended to the document a certificate from a neighbouring chief that the man with whom they were dealing was, in fact, entitled to dispose of the land in question, a precaution that was not altogether unnecessary.

In the Pretoria Archives there is a long-winded declaration[3] by a gentleman who has omitted to sign his name, which, after frequent repetitions of his own honesty and the wanderings of his family, proceeds to record some extremely dubious transactions in real estate. Briefly, he claims to have bought the land between the Modder, the Vaal and the Sand Rivers on May 15, 1839, from

[1] Quoted in Cory. "Rise of South Africa" III. 396. [2] Cloete: *History of the Great Boer Trek* p. 94. [3] T1/1200.

one " Capeteyn David Dansie Corander Bosman " (*i.e.*, the Hottentot chief Danser with whom A. H. Potgieter negotiated) for seventy sheep and a riding horse. He appends a statement dated November 28th, 1839, to the effect that Danser really was the owner of the area in question, and one from Jan Bloem, another Griqua Hottentot, of the 1st July, 1841, to the effect that it did not belong to anyone else. In spite, however, of the writers' impassioned appeal to " alle Regters zoo wel als aan het Publiek " to ascertain " bij de zendeling zoo wel als bij alle de Capetyns aan deze zijde de grootrevier " the truth of his claims, it seems better to discount the value of the document altogether, except as an example of the sort of transaction that must have been very common during the early days of the migration.

It is significant that no sooner were the Voortrekkers clear of the Colony than they themselves returned to that practice of treaty making which their modern champions so much condemn. Let it be granted at the very beginning that natives are incapable of understanding the sanctity of a written undertaking, and that treaties made with them have, in practice, proved useless. It is none the less unfair to condemn the Cape Town administration, or even the Philip school, for their recourse to treaties, and at the same time to ignore that written agreements of this kind play a share even larger in the history of the Voortrekkers. Criticism of treaty making is wisdom after the event.

Retief's personal relations with the natives seem on the whole to have been friendly, though he wisely endeavoured to prevent close contact between whites and blacks. Not even the proved friendship of Moroka persuaded the Boers to accept his invitation to remain in the neighbourhood of Thabanchu. It was while searching for unoccupied land to the north that their advanced parties had been overwhelmed by Umzilikazi, and it was in continuation of the policy of friendly relations with native chiefs that Retief began his negotiations with Dingaan. Thus the first definite characteristic that can be isolated in the early history of the Trek is that the farmers desired to have as little to do as possible with settled tribes, and fixed their own homes at a distance from the kraals.

The election of Retief as Governor did not have the wished effect of quelling party strife. Difficulties appeared afresh, and jealousy

between the leaders of different groups developed to such an extent that separation seemed to be the only remedy. One party, which owned the supremacy of the Uijs family, had never forgotten its original intention to settle in Natal, while Retief himself was anxious to have a port through which he might secure ammunition and carry on an independent trade, free from British control. Uijs and Retief decided therefore to leave the plateau to Potgieter, and sent out their exploring parties across the mountains, through which they found a pass practicable for their waggons.

The only satisfactory harbour on the coast was Port Natal, which lies south-west of the Zulu territory, and was then occupied by the handful of English adventurers who laid the foundations of D'Urban. South of the Tugela, which formed the Zulu border, the land though fertile was almost uninhabited. Retief had most probably heard of the refusal of His Majesty's Government to annex the port a few years before, and the whole seemed an ideal spot for settlement. Dingaan, brother, murderer and successor to Tshaka, now held sway over the Zulu people, and exercised some sort of control over the waste country to the south. He would be the nearest and most powerful neighbour of any state set up in the plains of Natal, and Retief, in his desire to invest all his actions with the sanctions of legal formality, entered into negotiations with him for the cession of the land south of the Tugela. Though Dingaan's title to the land was not impressive, being based only on the depredations of Tshaka and not on prescriptive right, and although the Zulu kings had already granted it away to the English,[1] the friendship of the chief was essential, and Retief paid a visit to his kraal.

At first Dingaan seemed not unfavourable to Retief's request. He complained, however, that he felt disinclined to trust the Boers, since strange people, in strange dress, armed with guns, and riding animals whose description tallied with that of the farmers' horses, had attacked one of his herds a short while before and carried off a number of his cattle.

Retief disclaimed all connection with the marauders. He attributed the robbery to Sikonyela, who owned horses and guns, of whose people some had adopted European dress. Dingaan professed to accept the explanation, and promised to allow the

[1] In 1824. Note also Gardiner's *Treaty of* 1834.

emigrants to settle in the country they desired, provided they, in return, would vindicate their good faith by recovering the cattle from Sikonyela. Retief accepted the conditions, returned across the Drakensbergen, decoyed Sikonyela into his presence and held the chief captive until he had surrendered 700 head of cattle supposed to be the property of Dingaan, and further, sixty horses and some guns. The cattle were returned to Dingaan, who now announced himself ready to enter into a formal engagement with Retief and his party.

In reality his feelings, if ever they had been favourable to the emigrants, had undergone a change. The reason is not easy to determine. After the massacre a story went round the Trekker camp to the effect that in the interval Dingaan had been visited by some Englishman or Englishmen and instigated to the crime. The names of the Rev. Mr. Owen, Captain Gardiner, and of some of the settlers at Port Natal were mentioned. It was pure gossip, natural enough in the days of bitter race feeling, when "the Englishman" was the villain of the story. There is no justification for resuscitating it at the present day. Even Retief's biographer, more by innuendo than categorical statement, has lent the weight of his authority to the charge.[1]

The matter has no place here, but it may be noticed that all his elaborated "independent witnesses," from the intelligent foreigner to unbiassed Englishmen and captive Zulu women, are neither independent nor witnesses, but may be reduced to the tittle tattle of the trekkers' camp. Owen was horrified at the massacre, and the settlers at Port Natal fitted out an expedition to avenge it. The utmost that can be said, though even this is largely guess work, is that some of the people of Port Natal were not so enthusiastic as their neighbours over the prospect of annexation by Retief. This, however, is not to say that they egged on Dingaan to murder him : two of the Boers, Owen's guests, boasted to his servant lad that the Zulu King was their friend, and that they were going to drive the English into the sea,[2] but no one would use this to trump up a charge of instigating to murder against them.

The most probable explanation is that Dingaan's policy of opposition to the settlement of the vacant territory was really

[1] Preller : *Piet Retief*, p. 204. [2] *ibid*, p. 205.

irrevocable, and that in proposing the expedition against Sikonyela he acted with the express intention of leading the farmers to destruction. If he could involve them in a war with the terrible Mantatees they would cease to be a danger to himself. The expedient failed, and news came that the son of MaNtatisi had been held to ransom. Hundreds of waggons were crossing the mountains into the Natal territory and Dingaan found himself hurried into getting rid of his unwelcome guests by means of deliberate massacre. The large escort which accompanied Retief to witness the signing of the deed of transfer and the sham fight with which the chief was regaled did not tend to reassure his peace of mind. Mrs. Millin has pointed out[1] that some explanation of the chief's terror may be found in the shout of " Kill the Wizards " with which he gave the signal for the slaughter.

The story of what happened in Natal that summer needs no fresh telling. Towards the end of 1837 large numbers of emigrants—over a thousand waggons, according to Cloete—crossed the Drakensbergen, and spread over the northern districts of Natal, penetrating as far as Bushman's River. Early in 1838 Retief left for Umgungundhlovo, Dingaan's kraal, with an escort of seventy white men and some thirty Hottentots. Arrived at the Great Kraal he entered into negotiations for the cession of the land between the Tugela and the Umzimvubu. This is practically the stretch of country covered by the present province of Natal, and included the Port Natal territory that had already been the subject of two grants to others.

On 4th February, after signing the document, Dingaan lured the entire party into the kraal and ordered their murder, sending out fresh impis to secure the extermination of the rest of the Boer population in Natal. In this massacre nearly 500 whites, men, women and children, were slaughtered before the remnant could draw together into laager. A time of great misery followed. The survivors had lost all their cattle, and were left helpless in wild uncultivated country. To make matters worse, two punitive expeditions went disastrously astray. One from Port Natal, consisting of a few English traders and a body of natives, seven hundred in all, was practically exterminated. The second, some four hundred farmers under Uijs and Potgieter, badly hampered

[1] *The South Africans*, p. 27.

by a quarrel between the leaders, fell into an ambush and escaped only with heavy loss.

Dingaan launched another attack in August, but was beaten off. Potgieter retired from Natal after his defeat, but reinforcements under the command of A. W. J. Pretorius arrived from beyond the mountains, and an invasion of Zululand was begun. It resulted in a great victory at Blood River on December 16th, when the attack of a native army some ten or twelve thousand strong was beaten off from the farmers' camp, leaving, so it was claimed, three thousand dead.

The Trek to Natal may be reckoned as coming to an end with the battle of Blood River. Professions of friendliness and the making of treaties had ended in massacre and war. But it is only fair to the farmers to point out that the conflict had been none of their seeking. Their own desire had been for a settlement in the land south of the Tugela, which was then, as the evidence before the Natal Native Affairs Commission of 1852 went to show,[1] peopled only by a few miserable groups of refugees not more than three thousand strong.

The philanthropist campaign against the farmers did not cease with their departure from the Colony. Even the wars against Dingaan, waged in self defence against a chief notoriously bloodthirsty and treacherous, were represented in an unfavourable light. Missionaries actually in contact with Dingaan, like Mr. Owen, would never have reported in his favour, and some other influence is clearly traceable in the following despatch,[2] dated 8th June, 1838, from Lord Glenelg to the Governor of the Cape.

He had just heard of the murder of Retief, and proceeded: "Much as I lament the fate of these misguided men, I cannot feel surprise at this result of their proceedings. It was not to be expected that the natives of the country adjacent to the Colony would suffer themselves to be overrun by these invaders, and still less that those who quitted home, and in some cases committed themselves to a career of plunder and aggression, could receive at a distance from the frontier that assistance that they had voluntarily renounced."

The Secretary of State was labouring under misconceptions—Dingaan's lands, for instance, were not "adjacent to the Colony"—

[1] Bird: *Annals of Natal*, I. 548. [2] *ibid*, I. 399.

which were all the more unfortunate since they caused Her Majesty's Government to be suspected of prejudice, and weakened its authority when there were genuine scandals to condemn. It is notorious that the Colonial Office depended largely for its information upon a little group in Cape Town of whom Dr. Philip, Independent Minister and Local Agent of the London Missionary Society, was the leading spirit. It seems very probable that the same group was responsible on this occasion. In any case the Boers blamed Philip and his friends for their bad reputation, and relations between farmer and missionary were not improved.

CHAPTER III.

THE REPUBLIC OF NATAL.

The Battle of Blood River saved the European settlement in Natal. The Trekkers parcelled out the land afresh, and fixed their capital at a village that they named Pieter-Mauritzburg. Here they established a court of justice under an official whom, mindful of the system that the English had superseded in the Cape Colony, they called a "landdrost," and set up a legislative body known as a Volksraad or People's Council. There was no executive. The carrying out of the Volksraad decisions was often deputed to A. W. J. Pretorius, who had been elected Commandant General, and his military duties naturally required that he should be the usual intermediary between the legislature and the tribes.

The establishment of a settled government with a territorial basis instead of the peripatetic camp rule of the Trek made native policy once more an urgent question. The history of relations between civilized and uncivilized races in South Africa falls naturally into three stages. The first is one during which the two races eye one another at a distance. Numerically inferior, the whites are inclined to try methods of conciliation in dealing with the natives. Native rulers are treated as sovereign and independent princes, and are flattered with fine words, and "gifts" that are not far removed from tribute. It is the time of the adventurer and concession hunter, such as marked the reign of Lobengula and the Swazi king. The second stage brings open war. Sometimes it is precipitated by some foolhardy aggression, sometimes preceded by small forays and punitive expeditions that culminate in a great campaign. Such in Natal was that which ended with the defeat of Dingaan. The third and last stage sees the native reduced to subjection. It is often preceded by a period in which the chief is compelled to accept a certain degree of suzerainty, though he may yet retain his position and powers as head of his tribe.

In the history of the Trek the first of these stages is marked by the "governorship" of Retief. He addressed his letters to

"Dingaan, King of the Zulus," while his dealings with native tribes display no thought of subjugation. The treaties with Kaffir chiefs recognize them as independent and technically sovereign princes, while that which the white man's written document called a "purchase price" sometimes looks perilously like a present or tribute. The reason for the policy is perfectly clear, since the farmers were inferior in strength and dared not risk the enmity of the natives.

The second stage in Voortrekker native policy, that of war and unrest, began in Natal with the murder of Retief and his party by Dingaan. The vengeance exacted for this treachery was to bring on the third period, that of subjugation.

The war against Dingaan falls into two well marked divisions, of which the first has been traced down to the battle of Blood River in December, 1838, and the subsequent capture and destruction of Umgungundhlovo. During this period the farmers carried on the war unaided save for assistance from the little English settlement at Port Natal. The second campaign, begun with the assistance of a large body of Zulu rebels, showed them committed to a great extension of power.

There is sometimes a tendency to exaggerate the strategic, as opposed to the moral, importance of Blood River. Dingaan had been defeated, but not crushed, and he was still a dangerous enemy. The farmers would have found themselves forced, sooner or later, to arrive at a definite military decision. As it was they seemed to have no clearly defined policy and merely waited on events. Meanwhile Dingaan, after setting fire to Umgungundhlovo, retired to the north. Here he made fresh proposals for peace, but evidently was only playing for time, and an attack upon Sobhuza, a chief living north of the Pongola River, showed that the Zulu military machine was still strong. In the end the waiting policy adopted by the farmers bore fruit.

In the winter of 1839 Panda, half brother to Dingaan, crossed the Tugela and appealed to the farmers for assistance. Discord had shown itself in the Zulu ruling family. Friction between the sons of a chief is a common phenomenon in the history of South African tribes. Dingaan had himself cleared the way to the throne by the murder of Tshaka, and his own reign was to end with the revolt of a brother. Panda was known to be of unwarlike

tastes, and Dingaan regarded him as quite unfitted to be a rival, even though he was full brother to Tshaka, and allowed him to live at the Great Kraal, where he was reputed to find consolation for the loss of power in the company of his numerous wives. In spite of, or perhaps because of, his unwarlike nature a growing party in Zululand looked to him as a possible leader. Many even among the Zulus had wearied of constant warfare and bloodshed, and these looked to Panda for the chance of peace and natural development. Internal dissensions among the Zulus thus enabled the farmers to play a part much like that of French and English in India.

After the defeat of Dingaan, Panda broke with him and appealed to the farmers for help. It was some time before the cautious members of the Volksraad would promise even to treat with him. Memories of the treachery of Dingaan were still fresh in their minds, and it was only after Panda had submitted to an examination by members of the Raad that they authorized representatives to come to terms. On the 23rd October, 1839, a deputation from the Volksraad interviewed the fugitive chief. The farmers recognized Panda as chief of the Zulu people, and undertook to give him military assistance to regain his throne. In return he ratified Dingaan's grant of the territory between the Tugela and the Umzimvubu and promised to pay over the cattle that had been demanded from him by way of indemnity. Among the secret clauses, so Delegorgue says,[1] was a promised cession of St. Lucia Bay to the Republic of Natal. In the mean time Panda was to be granted a temporary location on the side of the Tugela occupied by the farmers, where he might be safe from the wrath of Dingaan.

The transaction was a simple bargain and calls for little comment. The emigrants bought the land they needed by means of military assistance to the Pretender to the Zulu throne. Success would provide a double advantage: not only would they achieve a valid title to their land, but their avowed enemy Dingaan would be replaced by one who owed everything to their good offices.

Public opinion among the Boers was not unanimous, and it seems that the original intention of the Volksraad had been to

[1] Bird: *Annals of Natal*, I. 559.

reject Panda's appeal. The minute book records a resolution of the 3rd October, 1839, by which it was decided not to allow the "Zulu upper-chief Panda to remain on this side Tugela," and if he were unwilling to move, to expel him by force. This decision was probably inspired by fear of treachery, but Delegorgue speaks also of the "white inhabitants of Natal (who) were at that time thinking less of defending themselves from all danger than of possessing themselves of the 25,000 head of horned cattle that Panda . . . had brought with him."[1] The anxiety of the farmers shows itself in the precautions taken by the Commandant General on the expedition. The two forces, white and black, moved upon parallel courses some miles apart, and the farmers' commando saw to it that Panda's army was heavily engaged before joining battle.

The expedition against Dingaan set out from Pieter-Maritzburg on the 13th January, 1840, invading Zululand by way of Sunday's River and Biggarsberg. On the 31st January occurred an incident which, even in the opinion of Cloete, is a very serious blot on Pretorius' reputation. To treat with the whites Dingaan commissioned his favourite induna Tambuza, who was accompanied by a minor chief Kombizana. Tambuza was, with Umhlela, the ruling power in Dingaan's kraal, and his master's choice is an indication that he was probably in earnest. In any case the induna presented himself in the capacity of an envoy, and as such his person was sacred. Pretorius could do no more than decline to receive him. It happened that he was a personal enemy of Panda, and the latter, on being summoned to the farmers' council of war, attacked him savagely. He accused Tambuza of being a spy and asserted in particular that it had been he who suggested to Dingaan the murder of Retief and his companions. Pretorius knew that Panda was not unprejudiced. The chief had told the Volksraad committee that Tambuza and Slela (Umhlela ?) had advised Dingaan at the very beginning of his reign to get rid of the most dangerous of his rivals by murdering his half-brother. It was only natural that the latter should take advantage of the first opportunity of gaining his revenge. The *Journal* of the expedition records that Tambuza was shown to Panda's captains and that these clamoured for his death, accusing

[1] Bird : *Annals of Natal*, I. 554.

him of "horrible mutilations of women" and of being chief instigator of all Dingaan's crimes.[1]

A hasty court martial was held, which Delegorgue cynically decribes as being "composed only of judges and a reporter," while he likens "this council composed of weak and cruel people," to a "revolutionary tribunal . . . in the days of the Terror." Tambuza and his subordinate were condemned to death. It is probable that Tambuza, chief counsellor to Dingaan, was as bloodthirsty a ruffian as could be wished. This is no excuse, however, for the murder of a commissioned representative, and does not apply in any case to Kombizana, who was tried and executed at his side.

The two prisoners were shot at once, and, whatever his crimes, Tambuza met his fate with calm courage. Delegorgue's account of their end deserves to be remembered :

"I must add—I who witnessed these debates—that Tambuza was pressed to make admissions, but that he was silent on his own behalf, and only spoke in assertion of his comrade's innocence : a proof of disregard of self, of admirable disinterestedness at such a time : and when Pretorius spoke to him of God (Inkosi Pezulu), the Master on High, the Dispenser of eternal punishment, which he might avoid by a course of conduct to then unknown to him, Tambuza objected that he had but one master, that it was his duty to remain faithful to that Master to the last : and that after having so acted, the Master on High, if there were one, could not fail to appprove his conduct."

A series of actions took place early in February, in the course of which Panda put Dingaan to flight and drove him northwards across the Pongola River. There he was captured and brought before his old enemy Sobhuza, who had him tortured to death in his presence.

On the 14th February, Commandant General Pretorius proclaimed Panda King of the Zulus, and the occasion was marked by a salute of 21 guns. At the same time the Commandant General announced that the Boer territory would extend from the Black Umfolosi in the north to the Umzimvubu River in the south. In addition to the Natal territory these boundaries

[1] Bird : *Annals of Natal*, I. 567, s.q.q.

include the greater part of what is now called Zululand, while the proclamation specifically mentions the coveted S. Lucia Bay, and thus they tacitly imply some sort of suzerainty over Panda. The latter undertook to pay an indemnity of 36,000 head of cattle on behalf of Dingaan, and to hold his army at the disposal of the Boer government.

The subordinate position that Panda was to hold was made very clear, certainly to the Boers, if not to himself. W. J. Pretorius, one of Bird's authorities for this period, significantly remarks[1]: "Panda was recognized as King of the Zulus, but only in the sense of being subject to the Boer government, and bound to accept their demands." On the 10th February, Pretorius had warned the chief that he would not be allowed to make war upon other tribes without first seeking permission from the Volksraad, and the proclamation of the 14th implies an actual annexation of territory rather than a vague protectorate.

Whether Panda himself realized the full extent of the Boer claim is, of course, another story. His own reply to the Commandant General as reported both by Delegorgue and the *Dagverhaal* of the expedition do not seem to imply more than an ordinary defensive alliance, and it is impossible to say how far the interpreter reproduced the clauses that involved subservience. It is most probable that Panda and Pretorius had widely different ideas of the meaning of the engagement into which they had entered.

The death of Dingaan and the establishment of Panda closed the struggle between the two races in Natal. Skirmishes with native tribes still continued, and the campaign against a chief called Ncapay was to be of considerable importance, but the main conflict had ended in favour of the white civilization. The Voortrekkers now found themselves committed to a step forward in the definition of a native policy. Hitherto they had been content to bargain with the chiefs upon equal terms. The ease with which they had changed the succession in Zululand determined them to be masters. None the less they were torn between two ideals. Panda's installation was greeted by a "royal salute" from the Trekkers' guns, a clear indication that he was to be the real ruler of his people. The farmers did not desire to be burdened

[1] *Annals of Natal*, I. 237.

by petty details of administration, and were content to leave to their nominee the actual government of the Zulu state. On the other hand, between the Umzimvubu and the Umfolosi the will of the white man was to be law. This, as W. J. Pretorius showed, was certainly the intention of the Trekkers. At the same time actual facts show Panda to have been practically independent.

The best summing up of the position is to be found in Delegorgue's comment[1] on the annexation—"[Pretorius] sought by all means to give great publicity to this act of taking possession, which was nothing more than empty sound. No one applauded it: on the other hand no one disputed it, because there are innocent things that do neither good nor harm, at least for the time." In other words everyone recognized that the solemn annexation was an empty formula, yet at the back of men's minds lay the hope that some day this worthless claim might be made the basis of a tangible assumption of power.

The famous Aborigines' Committee of the House of Commons had already laid down the general principle with singular penetration—"Compacts between parties negotiating on terms of such entire disparity are rather the preparatives and the apology for disputes than securities for peace: as often as the resentment or the cupidity of the more powerful body may be excited, a ready pretext for complaint will be found in the ambiguity of the language in which these agreements must be drawn up, and in the superior sagacity which the Europeans will exercise in framing, in interpreting and in evading them."[2]

In practice the authority of Panda was interfered with as little as possible, and in the short time that remained to the Republic of Natal no question arose to challenge the farmers' nominal supremacy. What might have happened had not Her Majesty's Government restored complete independence to the Zulus is another question.

The policy of maintaining control through a nominee ruler may be paralleled from incidents in the history of India, but there is another, and that a less reputable analogy, between the history of Natal and Bengal. The servants of the East India Company saw to it that they had a share in the wealth of the Indies that

[1] Bird: *Annals of Natal*, I. 575. [2] Quoted in Brookes' *History of Native Policy*, p. 19.

lay around them, and the " nabob " became a distinctive feature of the social life of the Eighteenth Century. In a more homely fashion the same scenes were re-enacted in South Africa.

Even in the days of Retief the beauty and number of Dingaan's cattle aroused the admiration of the governor's party. Their reports of enormous herds, arranged so that each contained only cattle of the same colour, excited the cupidity of their fellows. The period of massacre, war and unrest that the farmers had suffered destroyed large numbers of cattle and reduced their owners to starvation. Hence Panda was forced, nominally as " compensation " for the losses that they had incurred at the hands of Dingaan, but actually as the price of his throne, to covenant to pay over to the farmers the enormous number of 36,000 head of cattle.

In due course the fine was paid, and distribution was ordered among those who had suffered loss from the Zulu. Actually it seems to have been regarded as fair spoil for whoever could help himself. The vast herd was plundered before ever it reached the territory of the Republic, others carried off many times their fair share. It was a riot of selfishness and greed. The preliminary taste only whetted the appetite for more, and various devices were concocted for increasing the supply of cattle. Further " fines " were inflicted upon Panda, and other chiefs in turn found themselves singled out.

On the 6th March, 1840, the Volksraad decided to keep a chief named Joob in prison as a hostage, while his father was released to collect 3,000 head of cattle as a ransom.[1] Another native named " Om Sekaay " was despatched to collect a ransom of 8,000 head for his father " Cambie," who was to remain in captivity until the sum was paid. The next day it decided to demand from Panda the number of 15,000 head of cattle which, it said, " appeared to be the shortage " from the number owing from Dingaan, while the Volksraad expressly declared that this was to be reckoned over and above the ransoms demanded from the minor chieftains on the previous day.

Naturally enough the pernicious system of receiving presents from native rulers raised its head. On November 11th, 1839, A. W. J. Pretorius informed the Raad that altogether 1,425 head

[1] For all these see the Volksraad Minutes for the days in question.

of cattle had been received from various chieftains, and enquired what it wished to have done with them.

The " fine " imposed upon Dingaan was to prove a veritable widow's cruse, capable of indefinite expansion. On the 6th January, 1842, the Raad discovered that Sobhuza had captured " a large number of Dingaan's cattle " which should in the opinion of its members have gone to swell their herds. It resolved to demand their surrender from Sobhuza, and, in the event of his refusing to hand over, to concert an attack upon him with the assistance of Panda and his Zulus. It was, of course, mere plunder, disguised by the thinnest of pretexts.

The chief impression left by the reading of these incidents is the phenomenal wealth of the Zulu tribe. The number of cattle possessed by Tshaka and Dingaan must have been almost incredible. They serve also to explain those wars of Tshaka that brought about the Lifaqane. In the absence of any means of artificial feeding the grazing area required for the Zulu herds of cattle was immense, and the neighbouring tribes must often have been driven off simply in order to secure pasture.

It is not impossible to sympathize with the farmers. They had lost heavily in the troubles that arose out of the treachery of Dingaan, and might fairly claim that some sort of compensation was only equitable. But, as in the case of India, the demands of the Europeans very early transgressed the limits of justice and even of common sense. It seems probable that only the early withdrawal of the farmers saved the Zulu nation from an economic crisis that would have had dire results.

But the independent Zulu race was not the only problem in native policy that the Boers were called upon to face. The question of natives living within the borders of the Republic was if anything still more urgent, and the danger increased daily. Reference has already been made to the evidence given before the Native Affairs Commission of 1852. The testimony of the older inhabitants of Natal, including the survivors of the first English settlement, was unanimous to the fact that the country south of the Tugela was practically depopulated before the Great Trek. The evidence emphasized another phenomenon—the great

influx of refugee natives[1] that followed the establishment of settled European government in the Natal territory. These refugees were of all sorts and conditions. Some fled from the barbarities of the new chief Panda, others from the warlike tribes to the south, while others again were survivors of tribes that had originally occupied the land before being driven thence by Tshaka and Dingaan. The farmers regarded the country as their own by right of conquest and occupation, to say nothing of the original grant from Dingaan and its confirmation by Panda. They therefore resented the intrusion of the refugees, who settled upon the land wherever they pleased regardless of the claims of any European farmer, and whom it was impossible either to exclude or remove.

The first policy attempted was one of exclusion, and the Volksraad passed a law which forbade any native to cross the Tugela. This was directed against refugees from Zululand to the north, and it has been shown how it was proposed to apply the regulation to Panda himself. The policy failed in the face of two difficulties, the overwhelming nature of the stream of immigrants, and the anxiety of the individual European to obtain labour to work his farm.

The Volksraad then decided to face the facts, and to establish a huge reserve for the settlement of the refugees: thither all those natives who had already squatted within the territory of the Republic were to be transferred. The scheme certainly offered a solution of the difficulty, but demanded considerable administrative ability on the part of those who would be called upon to carry it out, while it aroused criticism from others, such as the people of Cape Colony, to whom part of the facts were unknown.

Briefly, the proposal was to transfer the whole number of the refugees from the districts in which they had settled, and to establish them in the stretch of country lying along the coast to the north of the Umzimvubu River. The Volksraad approved of the scheme on 2nd August, 1841, and prefaced its resolutions with a declaration that it had no intention of disturbing any who had been inhabitants of the land before their own arrival. At the same time it put on record its own claim that in practically every case the whites had been first in the field.

[1] Dr. Brookes pillories the Commission for their use of the word "foreigners," which he notes as "the Englishman's definition of humanity" (*Hist. of Nat. Pol.*, p. 54). The point they were trying to make was that the refugees did not belong to the indigenous tribes of the district.

The district set aside as a native reserve was part of the coastal plain of Natal, stretching from the mouth of the Umtamvuna to the Umzimvubu, and was declared to be extensive, fertile, well supplied with wood and water, and in every way suited to be the nursery of a great Kaffir nation. This strip of country, which did actually deserve most of the praise that the Volksraad bestowed upon it, was to be granted to the natives for so "long as their behaviour remained satisfactory" and as long as they obeyed the rulings of the government of the Republic and the laws made by the Volksraad.

The district was to be ruled by an "upper chief" or "resident" to be appointed by the Raad. The use of alternative titles suggests that the Volksraad had not yet determined whether the official in question was to be a white man or a native. The actual task of removal was entrusted to the Commandant General, assisted by the burghers. He was first to summon a meeting of the chiefs and to explain to them the intentions of the Raad, so that there should be no misunderstanding, while the Volksraad made over to him the duty of appointing the "Resident" for the first turn, and of making formal treaties with the native groups.

Those natives who were actually old inhabitants of the land were not to be disturbed, though they were to be offered the opportunity of going to the new reserve if they wished.[1] Finally, true to its jealousy of the establishment of an official class, the Raad ordered the Commandant General to act in all matters with the goodwill of the white inhabitants. Their wishes were to be ascertained, either by a series of public meetings, or by conference and consultation with the better informed among them.

It is hardly surprising that the latest development of native policy in Natal aroused considerable apprehension and criticism in Cape Colony. To members of settled European households the transportation of a whole nation seemed to infringe the most sacred rights of race and home. Public opinion at the Cape was influenced also by the danger, and that not altogether fantastic, that the disturbance of the native population in the Natal territory

[1] Probably they would have been encouraged to go.

might lead to another of those mad rushes, like that of the Mantatee horde, that would sweep over the Cape Colony in its career.

Closer examination shows the case in a better light. The refugees were homeless and many of them destitute, and there does not appear to be any particular injustice in moving them to a convenient reserve. On the other hand the Volksraad could lay claim to no quixotic philanthropy. The farmers were anxious to get rid of the bulk of their uninvited and unwelcome guests and the success of the scheme would ensure considerable political advantages. A large native state settled along the Umzimvubu, under the suzerainty of the Boer government and accepting its direction, would interpose a convenient buffer between the Republic and the tribes to the south. In particular it would provide a most useful protection against the Pondo chief Faku, whose untrustworthiness was suspect not without cause, and who even then was trying to play off his neighbours the English against his neighbours the Boers by representing himself as the ally of each in turn.

It should be noticed that here, as in the case of Panda, the retention of the tribal system and consequently of the rule of the chiefs was clearly taken for granted. The chiefs were to be consulted before the migration took place, and after it had been completed only a general supervision fell to the Republican suzerain. Nowhere in the early history of the Trek is there any indication that the farmers contemplated the destruction of tribal organizations or the assumption, after the manner of present day South African governments, of responsibility for every detail of native administration. The chief remained head of his tribe, native life and native justice were to continue unchanged. With the exception of an unwonted intertribal peace the individual native would have noticed no change in his daily life, and the new system would have passed unheeded save by the chief. It may be possible to substantiate charges of exploitation against the Voortrekkers, that of wholesale enslavement of native races is far enough from the truth.

The Volksraad scheme had a precedent in South African history. In 1835 Governor Sir Benjamin D'Urban as part of his settlement of the eastern frontier attempted to settle a strong

" Fingo " nation in his province of Queen Adelaide. The " Fingos " were remnants of the Amahlubi and kindred tribes who had fled from one of the onslaughts of Tshaka, and some thousands were planted by the Cape Colony Government between the Keiskama and Kat Rivers with the object of forming a barrier against the AmaXosa.

None the less the " Transportation Scheme " was not without its difficulties, and the Commandant General showed no undue haste in settling down to work. Though the " refugee question " was often discussed by the Raad nothing had been done when the Republic came to an end. The Vagrancy Code[1] of the 4th January, 1842 gives colour to the belief that the Volksraad at times favoured an alternative scheme for settling the natives, not in one place to the south of the Republic, but in locations assigned to them in each field cornetcy. On the 29th April it had changed its mind again and reminded[2] the Commandant General of his obligation to proceed with the transference of the natives within a fixed period, while a further resolution fixed the district as that between the Umkomaas and Umzimvubu Rivers, stretching twelve miles—four hours by foot—inland from the sea.

Meanwhile the British Government interfered once again in Natal. Rumours of the Republic's arbitrary dealings with the native tribes were increasing at Cape Town, and since the Colonial administration was being reminded of its legal responsibility for the deeds of those who were still nominally its subjects, H. Cloete was sent as Commissioner to negotiate with the Trekker government. During his visit proposals for the transportation of the refugees were naturally suspended, but on the 4th September, 1843, the Volksraad received a letter from Pretorius[3] complaining of the growing insecurity caused by the influx of natives.

The Volksraad, with what might almost have been taken for a grim sense of humour, referred the matter to Her Majesty's Special Commissioner, and suggested that all natives should be removed beyond the Tugela to the north, and the Umzimvubu to the south, except the few retained in service by the white farmers. It proposed the limitation of the native families on each farm to five, and requested Cloete to put its regulations into force in the most suitable manner.

[1] Page 43. [2] Volksraad Minutes. [3] *ibid*

Some months later—on the 4th March, 1843—the Volksraad received fresh complaints from its officials that natives were still pouring in. Again the matter was referred to Cloete, this time with the hint that the Raad had decided to treat whites and natives on an equal footing. Any natives, therefore, that had trespassed upon a white man's farm since January 1st of that year were to be ejected, by force if necessary, by the field cornet.

On the 22nd March the Volksraad decided that the procedure should be for the aggrieved farmer to complain to the field cornet. The latter should refer the matter to the landdrost, and receive instructions from him. On 8th July Pretorius sent another letter of complaint to the Volksraad in which he reiterated the insecurity caused by the increase in native squatters, but he was merely referred to the resolution of 22nd March. On the 2nd September a petition was received bearing sixty-five signatures and complaining of cattle thefts and the steady pressure of refugees. The Volksraad thereupon resolved that all natives who had entered the territory of the Republic since the arrival of the British troops should be given fourteen days' notice to leave the country. The resolution was merely a pious—or impious—expression of opinion, and no action was taken. The Republic of Natal, always better at decreeing than enforcing, was now moribund, and the Volksraad soon ceased to exist.

Some light is thrown upon the refugee problem by the experience of the British in Natal. In 1846 a committee of three was appointed, of whom Mr. Shepstone was one, to enquire into "the location of the native tribes now residing in the District of Natal upon land remaining at the disposal of the Crown." Its instructions informed the members that the existing population was only a fragment of one much larger which had been scattered by the Zulu raids.[1]

For the use of the Committee Mr. H. Cloete, who had served as special Commissioner, drew up a report which criticized very drastically the scheme that had found favour with the Volksraad. Cloete bears out the statement that the natives of the Natal territory at the time of the Trek were only about 3,000 in number, of whom some 2,000 had collected around the little group of English adventurers at Port Natal. Nevertheless he was inclined

[1] P. P. England, 1847-8, XLII. p. 329.

to regard the Volksraad's scheme as impracticable. His examination makes it certain that the Republican scheme, even in the most favourable circumstances, had stood very little chance of success. The refugees were reckoned at somewhere between forty and fifty thousand, and the removal of so great a number would have proved a physical impossibility. Though the ground to which it was proposed to transfer them was fertile enough, it was waste and needed clearing and preparation to make it fit for agriculture. A large tract of country would be required for so great a population, and the concession of a sufficient area would involve the development of a powerful and united native nation, thus building up in time a fresh danger for the white inhabitants.

Cloete himself had another scheme, which seems to be identical with one of the alternatives laid before the Natal Volksraad. The Republic had limited the number of natives to be employed by a single farmer to five. (This probably was not intended to include their families.) His own proposal was to allow each farmer to employ as many as he pleased, and then to distribute the balance of the refugees in suitable small locations scattered about the countryside. He believed that this plan would do away with the difficulties caused by the squatting of large numbers of natives upon a single farm, without incurring the dangers of the transportation scheme. At the same time the reserves would provide sources of labour, particularly the casual labour that every farmer requires at fixed seasons, conveniently close at hand.

It should be noted, however, that in spite of Cloete's report Dr. Adams, the missionary member of the Committee, was still able to recommend the centralization of the majority of the refugees between the Umlazi and Illovo Rivers, on a strip of land stretching twenty-four miles inland from the sea—a proposal which is almost identical with that adopted by the Volksraad.

Among the resolutions of the Volksraad there is one rather strange, which may be connected with the problem of the refugee "squatters." On 29th June, 1839, the Raad forbade any of "Dingaan's Kaffirs" to remain in kraals inhabited by Bushmen, and prescribed that those who did so were to be handed over by the chief of the kraal for execution. It is difficult to see the precise point of this regulation. The Bushmen did not in the strict sense of the word inhabit "kraals," the Zulus despised the

Bushmen, whom they looked upon as scarcely human, were not likely to have associated with them, and can hardly have been dangerous if they did so. Possibly the whole affair was due to a sudden panic on the part of the Raad. Their old enemy Dingaan was still alive and powerful and many alarming rumours must have gone the round of the village. If the resolution was founded upon any concrete fact then it probably means that refugees from Zululand were causing uneasiness.

The squatters, originally a nuisance, became a danger. The harassed officials of the eastern frontier of the old Colony would have enjoyed a certain grim satisfaction had they known that the Trekkers suffered as much from stock theft in their new Republic as they had done in their old homes. Strategically their position was much less sound. In the Cape Colony the thieves had come from one side only, across a river boundary guarded in some sort by military patrols. Here the farms were surrounded by Kaffirs, great tribes lay to north and south and west, while their territory was penetrated constantly by the stricken refugees. The question of cattle stealing was in fact closely connected with the refugee problem, and was one of the reasons whose urgency forced the Republic to take action and formulate a policy.

The legislation of the Republic of Natal upon the point has this particular interest that it illustrates the policy of the men who had complained most bitterly against those in power at the Cape. Perhaps their suggestions did not receive a fair trial, since the Republic collapsed a little more than four years after its establishment. At the same time advocates of the Natal policy would find it difficult to explain how the Volksraad could possibly have avoided the almost inevitable result of stirring up and perpetuating bitter strife. Certainly the record of those four brief years is not particularly encouraging.

The scheme for transferring the whole refugee population to a reserve near the coast was part of the policy for dealing with cattle theft, but in the absence of a system of regular police patrols even this was not likely to prove a final cure. The Volksraad was besieged with complaints of the loss of cattle and the Commandant General raised the matter[1] on the 3rd January,

[1] Volksraad Minutes.

1842. The remedy suggested to Pretorius by his correspondents seems to have been to send out a patrol after each theft to track the spoor of the stolen cattle.[1] If the latter were traced the thieves should be flogged and set to labour on public works, or if they took to flight, should be shot at sight. The futility of these suggestions is obvious if it be remembered that the Republic had no police force but the unwilling service of impressed farmers, and no prison staff whatever.

The Volksraad decided that drastic action was necessary to intimidate the natives, who were wandering about in bands between fifty and a hundred strong, and showed considerable truculence. Its regulations were embodied in a sort of " code " dealing with the kindred subjects of cattle theft and vagrancy. The Commandant General was empowered, on complaint being made to him of cattle theft, to call out a patrol of burghers to make a careful search among the neighbouring kaffirs. The patrols were authorized to treat as enemies all fugitives or any who took up a threatening attitude—in other words to shoot all who ran and all who protested. If stolen cattle were found at a kraal the Commandant General was entitled, not only to punish the guilty, but also at his discretion to eject the inhabitants and to destroy their village, cattle kraals and gardens.

The next group of regulations dealt with refugees. The Commandant General might authorize farmers to retain native servants to look after their cattle, but no natives were to settle on a farm without the permission of the European (or as the Raad put it, the Christian) owner. During the winter that followed—May–August, 1842—the Commandant General was to assign locations for the use of natives living in each field cornetcy, and to transfer thither all except those employed by the farmers.

The third group of regulations dealt with the problem of vagrancy. From the 1st February next ensuing each native employed by a farmer was to obtain a pass[2] from his employer which showed the following information :

[1] With this compare Lord Charles Somerset's " reprisal system," enforced by military patrols in the Cape Colony.

[2] The following is given in the Minute Book as a specimen :

No. 1. Pas voor den kaffer genaamd Joob of ook April oud omtrent 40 jaren is 5 voet 2 duim lang heef een teken van een snee aan zijn regter arm woont op de plaats Rasmuskraal van J. B. in Uijsdoorns heef bij zich syne vrouwen Sabiena en Anna met vier kinderen en 5 beesten.

Pieter M. Burg den 1 February 1842.

Gezien : B.B. Commt. of Veld Cornet. A.A.

1. His name,
2. His apparent age,
3. Any distinguishing marks,
4. The number of his wives, children and cattle,
5. His place of residence.

This was to be signed both by his master and the field-cornet. No native was to travel a distance of more than two hours on horseback from his home without a special pass stating his reasons. In its absence he was to be punished as a vagrant. A native might leave his master after he had spent two years with him and—presumably—might seek service with another, provided he obtained a pass from the Commandant or field cornet.

A clause of some interest required every native to provide himself with a " plate of wood or tin " engraved on the one side with the number of his pass, and on the other with the name of his master. The Commandant General might use his own discretion as to whether native women and children should be required to carry an identification disk. It was also laid down, perhaps with the idea of encouraging farmers to see that their servants procured these disks, that a native caught without one might be assigned by the field cornet to another master.

The most striking characteristic of all these precautions that the farmers considered necessary to preserve the peace is the demand they make for a large and efficient police force. The pass laws of the present day, regulations of much the same stringency, are administered by a large force of police and a considerable clerical staff. Frequent patrols are in fact the only satisfactory means of checking stock theft, but in Natal they involved calling out a commando of burghers. A farming population, busily engaged in opening up virgin country, would hardly welcome the incessant demands on their time, and the patrol system was doomed to break down. In practice the policy of the Republic was reduced to making a series of drastic punitive expeditions whose object was to terrorize the outlying tribes into leaving the white man's herds alone.

The typical example of such a punitive expedition is to be found in that directed against Ncapay, which has been discussed in detail below, but it might be useful to summarize here the disadvantages of the system as a whole.

In the first place a great deal of time was demanded that a farmer could ill spare. It had to be made worth the while of burghers to answer the call to an expedition, and the authorities had to see that there were large captures of cattle to distribute. The second was the difficulty of making the punishment fit the crime. There was always serious danger of attacking and alienating innocent, possibly friendly, tribes. Thirdly, both friend and foe found difficulty in distinguishing between authorized and unauthorized punitive expeditions, and many of the latter, as the Boer records themselves show, were simply plundering raids.

The Natal Republic had to meet another of the problems of native policy in its attempt to regulate trade. From an early date traders were forbidden free access to Zululand. This decision may have been influenced by the excesses that traders often committed, which irritated the natives and embarrassed the government, but more probably by the desire to reduce opportunities of smuggling arms and ammunition. None the less native trade was extremely profitable, and the Volksraad fell back upon an expedient borrowed from the example of the British administration in Cape Colony. This was to hold markets or "fairs" at regular intervals at some convenient spot upon the boundary. The "fairs" were under government supervision and opportunities for crime or for smuggling arms and ammunition could be considerably reduced.

The Volksraad's resolutions regulating the Zulu trade are to be found in an official letter[1] to the Commandant General dated 19th October, 1841, over the signature of the Secretary to the Volksraad. It had been decided that the Commandant General, who as chief executive officer of the Republic, was its usual representative in dealing with the natives, should be placed in charge of the trade with Panda. The first fair was to take place at the time of the full moon next ensuing, and was to last eight days. Fairs were to be held subsequently every six months, and the place was fixed as "the drift opposite Nonklaas," the lowest ford on the Tugela.

The regulations allowed the Commandant General to delegate the supervision of the fair to a "Resident" as his deputy. This official was to be subordinate to the Landdrost of PieterMaritzburg,

[1] R. 86/41.

and his chief task was to prevent the sale to the kaffirs of strong drink, firearms and horses. At the same time they provided that the "Resident" when appointed should enquire into the complaint of Panda that he had been robbed of thirty head of cattle.

There may have been some official of this sort, who may have been the same as the "Resident" in the abortive "transportation" scheme, but he seems to have left no trace in the records. The late Keeper of the Archives at Pretoria drew up an "Index of persons holding office" for the Republic of Natal, but there is no mention of the "Resident." Probably no one was appointed to the post.

The Volksraad's letter contains a final provision of some interest. The Raad had decided to make a presentation to Moroka, the Barolong chief who assisted the emigrants in the days of their adversity. The Commandant General was authorized to make arrangements for the gift, but the economical farmers limited its value to Rds. 50.[1]

The trade in firearms had a law to itself. The whites realized that their chief superiority over the savage tribes that hemmed them in lay in the fact that their guns, cumbrous as they were, transcended immeasurably any weapons that could be used against them. Their only hope of maintaining their position lay in keeping up this superiority, and it was a matter of life and death to the Republic to prevent the natives from obtaining arms. In carrying out its policy of securing the monopoly in firearms to white people the Volksraad passed three resolutions,[2] dated the 4th March, 1840, which prohibited absolutely the sale of arms and ammunition to coloured persons. A coloured man who had obtained a gun "in a legal manner" before the passing of the law was for the future to obtain a monthly permit. The punishment for the first violation of the law was a fine of Rds. 500,[3] for a third offence deportation beyond the limits of the Republic.

The regulation was naturally disliked by the trading community, which found in gun-running a ready source of income. Later on in the Western Transvaal a peculiar alliance developed between missionary and trader with the object of securing to the native the right to purchase arms, on the ground that he was left defenceless in the face of exploitation by the whites. But the

[1] About £3 15*s*. [2] Volksraad Minutes. [3] About £37 10*s*.

ban became equally a part of British policy, and the Lieutenant Governor of Natal and his Legislative Council soon passed an ordinance punishing any who should " give, sell or barter within the confines of (the) District . . . any firearms, gunpowder or any other munitions of war " with " a penalty not exceeding £100 for each offence."[1]

This completes the testimony of the records to the native policy of the Republic of Natal. Summarized, the lines of development upon which it had entered at the time of its collapse may be said to fall under two heads according to the two classes of natives with whom it had to deal. In the first place it was in touch with the great Zulu nation which remained settled in its home north of the Tugela : in the second, the farming community was brought face to face with the problems raised by the influx of refugees from outside, and the establishment of a large native population upon its own territory.

The Boers left the condition of the natives beyond their borders unchanged, except that they secured the succession of a chief who was well disposed towards them. It is true that they claimed a shadowy sort of suzerainty over Panda, but it may be doubted how far this was understood by either of the parties concerned. The refugees, on the other hand, came directly under the control of the Republic, and it is of some interest that this was the first occasion on which a European community in South Africa was faced by the problem of a large native population living side by side with the whites. Here two policies alternately found favour, the one advocating the transfer of all the refugees to a tract of land south of the Republic, where they might be left to develop along their own lines, the other suggesting that they should be scattered in locations throughout the country, where they would form convenient sources of farm labour. Sundry details concerning pass laws and trade, especially that in arms and ammunition, complete the picture.

One or two topics have not been touched. The personal relations that existed between farmers and natives as individuals, and slavery and the treatment of missions have been reserved for a later chapter. There they will be considered in connection with

[1] P.P. England 1850 : xxxviii. p. 535.

the charges brought by the missionaries against the Boer nation as a whole.

Before leaving the Republic of Natal it is as well to record what Cloete, the Special Commissioner who negotiated the surrender of the Natal Republic, had to say with regard to the character of the men whom he found settled in the country. " The emigrants as a body," he said, " form a most respectable, powerful and numerous body of men, who, neither allured by the thirst after gold, nor the desire to exterminate savage tribes, only sought for a country which they endeavoured lawfully to acquire, where they might set themselves in peace, secure as to their lives and properties."[1]

It may be possible to produce facts which controvert this opinion, but in any case Cloete's considered judgment deserves very careful attention.

[1] *History of the Great Boer Trek*, p. 121.

CHAPTER IV.

EARLY DAYS IN THE TRANSVAAL TERRITORY.

The other sphere of activity of the emigrant farmers was the inland plateau that stretches from the Orange to the Limpopo. Here the enquiry is not easy. The first settlers in the interior were few in number and the country promised little return to the adventurer. They attracted little notice from strangers and travellers, and of their records only a few fragments survive. Only after the fall of the Republic of Natal in 1843 and the consequent migration of numbers of its inhabitants into the interior did the rest of South Africa take much interest in its affairs. The task of deducing any settled policy from the evidence is made more difficult by the endless political and personal squabbles that split the white population into tiny states. The little independent republics covered a wide area, but their population was so scanty that central control of any sort was impossible. Policy and practice may have differed widely, and this was probably the case.

It has been seen that the quarrel in the Trekker camp at Winburg resulted in a division of forces. The larger body under Retief moved on into Natal, but a few farmers remained in the interior. After the establishment of regular government at PieterMaritzburg the northerners surrendered a certain measure of their independence, and became loosely connected with the central authority in Natal. They were organized into two districts, that of Winburg, the northern portion of the modern Free State, and the district of Potchefstroom, corresponding roughly with the south west of the Transvaal. These were nominally administered, under a still more nominal supervision exercised by the Commandant General of Natal, by Andries Hendrik Potgieter, the District Commandant, who enjoyed considerable personal prestige. At Potchefstroom met a representative body of a dozen members which after the submission to

Natal was known as the " Adjunckt Raad " to that of PieterMaritzburg.

The general type of inhabitant in the two districts differed considerably from that to be found in Natal. The farmers in the latter district intended to gain their living by the usual process of agriculture and pasture. Inland, elephants and herds of game wandered widely, and adventurers and hunters formed a common type. Among these pioneers was to be found a rabble population of all sorts, the shiftless creatures, not unknown at the present day, incapable of sustained effort, and even scallywags from the town population of Cape Colony.

Potgieter, nominally in control, must have had little influence over the mixed and widely scattered population. One of his reports[1] to his official superior Pretorius, Commandant General of Natal, confessed to his having heard that a body of farmers was out on commando against the natives, but the Commandant himself was unable to determine the truth of the rumour. This bears ominous testimony to the unsettled state of the district, and it is quite impossible to give a connected story of what was happening north of the Vaal.

Not even the character of Potgieter himself is certain. In his earlier days he seems to have been popular with the Englishmen with whom he came in touch, and even the missionaries had a good word to say for him. Yet he was the leader of the irreconcilable remnant of the emigrants, his last home at Zoutpansberg was notorious for abuses of native policy, and he was accused by his fellow farmers of being implicated in the slave trade. Some still defend his character, and maintain that it was deliberately blackened for party purposes, but he does not seem to have been a particularly attractive person. Hot tempered in dispute, harsh and violent when crossed, he was fond of dominating his fellows and obstinately bent on having his own way. His influence among natives was always considerable, and he could count on a very genuine loyalty from a band of devoted partisans, but his less pleasing characteristics gradually alienated most of his supporters and led to the decline of his authority.

Potgieter settled himself in 1839 at a farm called Doornkop, situate in the hills called Magaliesbergen that run westward from

[1] R. 91 1/41.

Pretoria. From thence he occasionally rode across the Vaal to visit his other districts. Even in the military sphere his control must have been of the slightest. The men who lived in Potchefstroom and Winburg had owned no authority even in the days before the Trek, and they were hardly likely to brook the interference of a Commandant whom they had made themselves. Hence it is difficult to estimate the measure of Potgieter's personal responsibility for the atrocities with which he was charged. At times he may have been held guilty of crimes of which he knew nothing.

The Commandant's farm was not far from Umzilikazi's old headquarters. The Matabele chief had been found out by an impi from Dingaan, even in his retreat at Mosega, and became alarmed at the increasing pressure of the white immigrants. He fled from Mosega in 1839 after a second defeat at the hands of the farmers, to the no small relief of the missionaries who worked around Kuruman. After many wanderings he established a new kraal in what is now called Matabeleland. Though their chief enemy had passed from the sphere of the Voortrekkers his defeat was by no means the end of their troubles.

At first the petty chieftains whom he had enslaved seem to have transferred their allegiance to his conqueror, whom they hailed as lord over all the land formerly ruled by the Matabele. Then independence raised its head. Umzilikazi had ruled with a rod of iron, but his flight allowed the broken tribes to reunite. Scattered clans began to creep back from the desert, and the western border of the " Transvaal territory " became the scene of considerable friction.

The first concern of a landowner is to secure his title-deeds, and the Trekkers were no exception. Occupation of the District of Winburg was probably held to be justified by the treaties made with surrounding tribes by Retief and Potgieter, though none of these documents has survived. For the northern district there exists a declaration[1] dated the 12th October, 1839, made by two chiefs Maleliele,[2] upper-chief of the Marotse, and Mattjawa,[3] chief

[1] R. 49/39.

[2] Professor Norton identified this name for me as that of a chief known to him as Motladiele of the Bahurutse.

[3] It seems that he was an underchief of Moroka, head of the Barolong. To one of my students I am indebted for the ingenious suggestion that his name is perpetuated in the railway station " Machavie," near Klerksdorp.

of the Maroekas. The original is preserved in the Pretoria Archives, bearing two crosses which appear to have been made by native hands, and the document seems to be genuine. It is to the effect that the land of the chiefs Magalie, Magata, Maseloa, Pilana and Ramathlape had in the past been seized by Umzilikazi, and that, in the opinion of the signatories at any rate, after the defeat of the Matabele it had devolved upon their conqueror Potgieter.

The name Magalie in this list is perpetuated in the Magaliesbergen of the present day, there is still a village known as Magatastad, while there are close parallels between Pilana and the Pilandsberg,[1] and Ramathlape and Ramathlabana, both of which are near Marico. The land in question is roughly that included in the modern districts of Rustenburg, Marico, Potchefstroom and the surrounding country.

As evidence to fact the document may, or may not, be trustworthy, as evidence to policy it is of considerable importance. It was, of course, drawn up by the farmers, and possibly by Potgieter himself, with the idea of justifying the occupation of native territory. It indicates a certain sensitiveness to the charge of despoiling peaceful tribes, and shows some desire to secure evidence in support of the contention that the original owners of the soil had already been displaced.

It is important too as illustrating Potgieter's view of his own claim to the land he ruled. He regarded himself as successor by right of conquest to the territory formerly occupied by Umzilikazi,[2] and secured the recognition of this claim by tribes in the neighbourhood. The document is thus intended to serve as the title deed to the Western Transvaal. If its facts be true it supports the farmers' contention that they not only occupied a territory void of all human inhabitants, but also conferred a benefit upon the surrounding tribes by crushing the tyrant who had reduced it to a wilderness.

Though not in strict chronological order, it may here be noted that the Boers added another justification of their rule after the Sand River Convention of 1852. This was that the treaty with

[1] I am indebted to Professor Walker for pointing out these parallels: see his *Historical Atlas of South Africa.*

[2] This is supported by Moffat, L.M.S., Kuruman, Nov. 22, 1852, and Edwards, L.M.S., Capetown, 1854.

the British Government granted them undisputed possession of all the country to the north of the Vaal River. By a separate agreement[1] which, though never submitted for ratification, was signed by the special Commissioners who drew up the main Convention, the sphere of influence of the South African Republic was declared to include the whole territory north of the Vaal, and the lower reaches of the Orange as far as the Atlantic Ocean.

That the Boer leaders intended to make full use of this concession appears from several comments in the missionary correspondence of the time. Moffat wrote[2] " They (the Boers) conceive that they have a special right to engage in wars and dispossess chiefs of the lands of their forefathers, by the late treaty between the British Government and them in which their independence North of the Vaal River is acknowledged and proclaimed. This in the judgment of these people includes the country north of the Vaal River from its source till where it enters the Western Ocean . . . formerly the Boer thought he had a right only over that portion of the country from which Moselekatse had been expelled."

The best picture of the Western Transvaal territory in the early days of white settlement is to be found in the report[3] of Potgieter to Pretorius that has been quoted above. Sent from his farm at Doornkop in 1841, it reflects the restless condition of the district, marauding expeditions disguised as punitive commandos going off into the unknown, rumours of white children at Umzilikazi's kraal, reports from spies who had penetrated into Matabeleland, stories of Dr. Philip's intrigues with native tribes, plans for an attack upon Umzilikazi, and so on.

The report shows, too, that the little Boer community was faced by the same problem that was at that moment confronting the Republic of Natal. The destruction of the tyranny of Umzilikazi was followed by a stream of native immigration, which is in itself a refutation of the worst of the sweeping charges of cruelty and enslavement that are sometimes brought against the farmer. Potgieter reported that he had received a visit from four chieftains living with Moroka, among them being the same

[1] Theal, on what evidence he does not say, hints that the Commissioners were rendered unusually mellow by the good dinner and its adjuncts. If this be true it would explain why Pretorius never pressed for ratification.
An official of the Pretoria Archives told the writer that he had seen the original written on a sheet of note paper, but it has been mislaid.

[2] L.M.S., Kuruman, 22 November, 1852. [3] R. 91 I./41.

Mattjawa who had signed the declaration three years before. They requested permission to be allowed to settle in lands " beyond the Mallepo River " over which the Boers claimed some sort of control, and expressed their willingness to live under their laws and jurisdiction. They asked also that they might be guaranteed from attack by the farmers while they were crossing occupied territory. Moroka himself forwarded one or two letters through his missionary, and Potgieter at last issued a pass permitting the clans to cross Boer territory, on condition that the chiefs came to see him, and that their people committed no aggressions upon the whites in the course of their journey.

The natives of the western Transvaal frontier did not always show the same consideration for the farmers' feelings. The preliminary defeat of Umzilikazi had led the neighbouring tribes to acknowledge the white man as master, but his suzerainty did not long remain undisputed. Only a few years passed before even the accommodating Mattjawa was reckoned among the enemies of the state, and the frontier became the scene of the forays and petty bickerings that figure in Livingstone's *Missionary Travels and Researches.*

The swift change was due, probably, to two causes. In the first place the great " Hunters' Road," the trading route into the interior, ran along the Transvaal border, and the natives throughout its length soon acquired arms and ammunition by trading for ivory. Secondly, closer contact with their new masters soon led the natives to realize their numerical inferiority. The possession of firearms has always had an unsettling effect upon uncivilized tribes, while the farmers after their dispersal into the scattered and lonely homesteads of the western districts presented an enemy completely different from the compact bodies of Trekkers who first subdued the country.

Potgieter and his fellows did not remain long at Mooi River. Acting upon the advice of Smellekamp, agent for the trading firm that had been founded in Holland with the object of exploiting the trade of the Voortrekkers, he transferred his possessions to a site on the edge of the mountains in what is now the district of Lydenburg. Here the new town of AndriesOhrigstad[1] was

[1] Named partly after *Andries* Smellekamp and G. G. *Ohrig,* founder of the Company.

founded in August of 1845. The object of the move was closer touch with Delagoa Bay—the only port now left open—but it involved contact both with the Portuguese, whose authority stretched in an ill-defined sphere around Lourenço Marquez, and with fresh native tribes in the eastern mountains. The latter, harried both by Umzilikazi and Sobhuza, were being encouraged by a time of peace to emerge from their retreats.

The newly-founded Republic of AndriesOhrigstad seems to have been set up, like its fellow Trekker states, in a tract of waste land. The records show no displacement of native tribes—one Volksraad resolution summons some of the citizens to return within the boundaries—and the student gains an impression of a little group of white men occupying and sharing out a vacant district, yet surrounded on all sides, and particularly to the north and west, by active and powerful native groups. For agricultural and domestic labour they rely, not on any inhabitants upon the spot, but upon " apprentices " and a " labour tax " levied upon the surrounding country. Irritation is caused among the neighbouring clans by visits from farmers in search of labour.

No definite reason emerges for the uninhabited condition of the country in which the town is founded. It may have been caused by the devastations of Umzilikazi, Sobhuza or Sochangan, or in view of the disastrous experience of the Boers themselves the desertion may have been due to the unhealthy nature of the district.

It is not easy to trace a connected sequence of events in the miscellaneous pronouncements that make up the record of Ohrigstad's native policy. The story that follows is conjectural at best, and the reader should bear in mind that only the bare facts can be vouched for : their meaning is a matter of private interpretation.

The problems that faced the Republic are easy enough to isolate. A tiny group of farmers, a few hundred all told, found itself surrounded on all sides by numerous and powerful tribes, with whom their leaders were compelled to negotiate at best on equal terms. The first problem, as it had been in the west, was to find some sort of legal title to the ground. The next difficulty was the old frontier problem of cattle lifting. No cattle farmer could maintain adequate supervision over the huge

herds necessary for his support, and the neighbouring kraals made every use of their opportunities. The third difficulty, akin to the two former in that it too arose out of the site chosen for the establishment of the Republic, was to prevent the intrusion of native bands into the territory that the farmers claimed as their own.

Although " vacant " in the sense that no kraals were actually established there, the site of Ohrigstad must have provided hunting ground for the tribes of the district, who probably looked upon it much in the same way as the inhabitants of a mediæval manor regarded their common waste. The establishment of European farmers within the " hunting area " naturally disturbed the game and diminished the native's opportunity of adding to his food supply. Native hunting parties continued to penetrate the district, even after it had been nominally split up into farms. These parties, when game was scarce, probably consoled themselves with the farmers' cattle.

These three problems were fundamental in Ohrigstad. They were the aim and object of its various experiments in native policy, and serve to explain most of its legislation.

The early years of the infant state were critical and chaotic. "Extra Raad Sittings" and " Provisional Raad Sittings " were frequently summoned to deal with some fresh phase of the native danger. The records bristle with complaints of farmers who had suffered the loss of their cattle, and accounts of retaliatory commandos. Proposals and counter-proposals appear for the settlement of the troubles with Mapoch, Sekwati and Malleuw. To construct a detailed history of the period from the scanty records would be almost impossible and of little practical value. The unsettled background of the native policy of the Republic is best illustrated by the two extracts[1] that follow, drawn from the records of the year 1852, seven years after the foundation of Ohrigstad and shortly after its virtual abandonment in favour of the more salubrious Lydenburg.

On September 16th a patrol reported to the Landdrost of Lydenburg that " the last house at Ohrigstad had been broken into, the goods scattered, the wheat sacks cut open and the wheat poured out, and most of the property carried off, the fat

[1] R. 430.a./52 and R. 448.a./52.

stock killed : the patrol also saw Kaffirs again in the neighbourhood of Ohrigstad, and could do nothing."

For the same district there is a return showing the number of cattle stolen by the natives between 30th August and 15th October, 1852. The total is given as 476, of which for instance the " widow Joubert " is reported to have lost 89. On the 20th October, 131 cattle, apparently obtained from native sources, were distributed among the sufferers. On this occasion the share of the widow Joubert was twenty-four head, but it was expressly stipulated that any cattle recognized and claimed by their original owner were to be handed back to him.

This was the condition of the country for many years. Raid followed on raid, commando on commando, with plentiful Volksraad discussions, until in Lydenburg and in Zoutspanberg, as in the rest of South Africa, the natives at last were conquered, and the native difficulty ended with the loss of the independence of the tribes and their submission to the white man's jurisdiction. Thence it has emerged afresh as the " Native Question."

The first anxiety of the people of Ohrigstad was to fix upon a policy that would provide some sort of legal justification for their occupation of the land. The question, however, became confused with political issues. The feud that had split the Trekkers in 1837 reappeared in the eastern Transvaal, and was to continue in one guise or another until 1880 and even into the years beyond. The opposing sides propounded different native policies, which in the absence of evidence are sometimes hard to determine. The course of events that can be pieced out must have been something like the following.

Before the move from Potchefstroom Potgieter interviewed Sekwati, the most important chief of the neighbourhood, and came to some sort of an agreement with him. On the 20th August, 1845—three weeks after the founding of the settlement—he handed in a treaty made on the 5th July " with Sekwati and a few of his captains " to be preserved with the Volksraad's papers.[1] The treaty itself has disappeared, an event not unconnected perhaps with the disputes that followed, and there is no evidence as to the nature of its contents, unless it be that the term used in the minutes is " vredenstractaat." This word might possibly

[1] Volksraad Minutes.

be used to support the theory that the document was a peace treaty pure and simple, having no reference to the sale or grant of land, but it would be unwise to build too much upon the use of a single expression.

The question of native policy then became involved in the political dispute. Potgieter was ambitious of becoming something more than an elected military leader, and aspired to the supreme executive power. Although supported by a number of enthusiastic followers he was obstinately opposed by an equally determined " democratic " party, which maintained that all authority was vested in the Volksraad of a dozen members. Before the end of the dispute the rival parties had come to blows, but in the meantime each sought to make political capital out of the question of " title-deeds."

It seems most probable that Potgieter relied upon his personal influence with Sekwati, and he may perhaps have tried to play the landlord to the little state on the strength of his treaty of the 5th July. The two points of view that emerged from the dispute are represented by two petitions still preserved in the Pretoria Archives.

That of Potgieter's opponents is to be found in a long rambling memorial[1] to the Volksraad dated 8th June, 1846. It is absolutely without literary form, discarding even the more rudimentary types of punctuation, but the basis of the complaint emerges clearly enough. The petition complains that Potgieter is trying to reduce his " subjects " to the position of " humble servants," and proceeds to attack his management of the native question. Smellekamp, the Netherlander commercial agent, whose word carried great weight, had advised the farmers to make definite agreements with the natives, and to acquire by purchase the land they needed. Potgieter was opposed to this, and had allowed matters to slide, neither purchasing the ground outright nor taking it by force. The result of this policy, according to the petitioners, was to be seen in a crippling shortage of native labour on the farms. This was due, so they hinted, to the feeling of unrest and uncertainty that existed among the neighbouring tribes. Further evidence of instability lay, so they urged, in the news that a chief named Kapoeza[2] had recently seized a tract

[1] R. 116/46. [2] Sobhuza ?

of land formerly in the possession of the emigrants. The petitioners therefore prayed the Volksraad to determine speedily whether it would follow the advice of Smellekamp and the wishes of the people, or give way to every whim of the Head Commandant, who they affirmed had just enriched himself by the free grant of a " place " in the village.

The petition winds on in pages of complaint, of which one of the most serious indictments seems to have been Potgieter's friendship for an Englishman named Hartley, but it touches on a point of interest in the matter of the ivory tribute. The petition alleges that gifts of ivory had arrived frequently from outlying chiefs, and suggests that they were turned by Potgieter to his own private advantage. His defence would probably have been that the tusks were personal gifts, in no way connected with his official position, but whatever its truth the charge establishes the fact that the receiving of gifts from native chiefs still continued. The material of the gift changed with the neighbourhood. In Natal the chiefs gave cattle, in Ohrigstad, on the edge of the elephant country, they gave ivory : later, when labour was scarce, they gave children, but the principle remained the same.

The Head Commandant's policy in the land question is easily understood. His influence over his people was purely personal, and would naturally be strengthened if the land that they occupied had been granted to himself as his own personal property. Equally intelligible was the attitude of his enemies, jealous of his power, and plotting its overthrow. It was naturally their business as a preliminary to further action to regularize the position of the state that they desired to control.

The views of what seems to be Potgieter's party are embodied in a petition[1] of the 1st May, 1846, which received the signature of sixty farmers. These desired that no change should be made in the policy that was being pursued with regard to Sekwati. They condemned the proposal to buy the land from him, but suggested that his former " free renunciation " of it might be rewarded by a gift of a few cattle. With the other chiefs of the neighbourhood, with whom it is to be presumed the question of land ownership did not arise, ordinary treaties of peace should be made as soon as possible.

[1] V.R. 17/46.

The phrase " his former free renunciation " perhaps refers to some grant, possibly that enshrined in the lost treaty of 5th July, made to Potgieter by Sekwati. This theory is supported by the following :

In May of 1846 the Volksraad, with which Potgieter had never been very popular, commissioned David Buijs, a halfcaste who enters frequently into the history of the Northern Transvaal, to negotiate a purchase with Sekwati. He gave evidence[1] concerning his visit at a Raad meeting on the 15th May, 1846. Sekwati was evidently puzzled by the anxiety of the Volksraad. He may have been primed by Potgieter, and in any case, anxious not to commit himself to a definite alienation of territory, he returned evasive replies. He had given the land freely to Potgieter, he said, and having once given could not sell or barter it again : he had alienated it completely in the first case, and could not again dispose of it. The Volksraad had invited him to come to Ohrigstad, but (so he told Buijs) he was afraid to venture there : and, though he would send one of his chief captains in his stead, the latter would have strict injunctions not to re-open the matter of the land. " Say also," he said, " it is as though I had sold a child, then am I no more master. Thus I gave the land : then am I no more master to deal with my own as I will."

The story of the land then becomes more confused, as the breach between Potgieter and the Volksraad became more bitter. The records suddenly show the Republic engaged upon an entirely fresh transaction. The only explanation of the new move is that the Volksraad realized the impossibility of getting anything definite out of Sekwati, and hit upon the expedient of " purchasing" the whole of the territory in dispute from a different person altogether, " Masous " minor son of Sobhuza. Sobhuza, or " Sipusa " as the Boer records render his name, was originally chief of the Ngwane clan. Entering the Transvaal territory from the coast as a fugitive from Tshaka he incorporated numerous petty tribes into one kingdom, which takes its modern name of Swaziland from his son Mswazi, the chief who figures in this transaction as " Masous."

A treaty[2] was entered into on the 25th July, 1846, with a certain " Samkuba," described as acting as regent for " Masous,"

[1] Volksraad Minutes. [2] R. 117/46.

and it is significant that the farmers whose signatures appear on the document were not supporters of Potgieter. In this document Mswazi is represented as declaring that he had granted certain portions of the territory won by his father Sobhuza to the use of " de Hollandsche Zuid Afrikaansche natie " which then occupied them, in return for one hundred head of cattle. One half of the purchase price was to be paid at once, and the remainder in the course of the next two years. On the back of the treaty is a record of the payment of the first instalment.

The land thus transferred is described in the document as bounded by the Olifants River, the Portuguese border and the 26th degree of latitude. Roughly, it includes the modern districts of Lijdenburg, Middelburg, Barberton and the greater part of Carolina, and, besides the territory actually colonized by the farmers, comprizes the land of several native tribes[1]. Strictly speaking, some of the landmarks given in the treaty—*e.g.*, the Pongola River—are inconsistent with one another, and point to the geographical features of the country being still largely unknown to the farmers, but the general intention of the document is quite clear.

Many features of the treaty give rise to suspicion. The territory was most carefully delineated, and its exactness should be contrasted with the vagueness of Potgieter's own transactions, both with Sekwati and in the Western Transvaal. Further, a term like the " 26th degree of latitude " could have no meaning for the natives, and it is hard to see how the most conscientious interpreter could have rendered it for the benefit of Somcuba's plenipotentiaries. Even the farmers can have had no idea of its implications.

Somcuba may not even have been Mswazi's regent. Apparently there is a tradition[2] that not Somcuba, Sobhuza's brother, but Malambule, his eldest son, acted as guardian during the minority. In that case the value of the transaction disappears altogether.

The circumstances all point to the conclusion that this was some bogus deal designed to supply a title to the land other than

[1] *E.g.*, those of Mapoch and Sekwati.

[2] For this information I am indebted to the Rev. A. T. Bryant, now Research Fellow of the University of the Witwatersrand : see the account of the dispute on page 77.

that at the disposal of Potgieter. Even if perfectly above-board it is difficult to see what legal right the treaty could have conferred. Sobhuza may quite well have conquered the previous inhabitants of the territory in battle, as the text of the treaty claims, but native wars are usually plundering raids, not aiming at territorial occupation. There is little doubt but that, at the time when the " sale " took place, the authority of his minor son carried no weight in the territory concerned.

The Republic of Ohrigstad thus found itself possessed of a pair of alternative " title-deeds," each at the disposal of one of its warring factions. But it had by no means settled its native problem. The years 1846 and 1847 saw considerable friction. On the side of the natives there was growing irritation, with corresponding anxiety on the part of the whites. The Volksraad of AndriesOhrigstad kept a close watch upon its neighbours and the evidence of native witnesses and spies showed that there was very considerable cause for alarm.

The unrest originated in the old Cape Colony problem of an indefensible frontier, but the penetration was not entirely from one side. Much irritation was caused by European hunting parties which pushed far beyond the land occupied by the farmers and obtained large quantities of ivory both by barter and the chase. The indiscriminate slaughter of game is reflected in a contemporary protest[1] of the Volksraad and the records of hunters and traders such as Chapman and Gordon Cumming. More than one species, elephant and quagga among them, disappeared from districts where once they had been prevalent.

Beside irritation at trespass and annoyance at being forestalled in the ivory trade, the native had serious cause for alarm in the reduction of a supply of food which was particularly needed in time of drought. To make matters worse, the hunting parties were not always of the most stable and law-abiding characters of the little community, and they were strongly resented even by chiefs who had not objected to the occupation of waste land by regular farmers.

On the 13th April, 1846, several native spies were examined by the Volksraad, and their evidence[2] showed considerable unrest

[1] Volksraad Minutes, 21 January, 1846. [2] Volksraad Minutes.

among the chiefs of the neighbourhood, Maliete, Mannekoos, Sekwati and their friends. A week later more was forthcoming, a native called "Mocoelana," a subject of Rasetoe, reported, "I have heard that Mannekoos will make no peace with the white men, but he wants to fight them, because he has taken the ground of Cona and wants to take the ground of Sekwati. I have heard that Sellekaats[1] has fled back. I heard from Majatie that Meletie has made a commando to chase the white men out of his land. He does not want to come there, but does not want the white man to come into his land. If Mannekoos and Rasetoe call us to make war with the white man we will do it; if Rasetoe and Matjawa should call Mannekoos to make war upon us he would do it because that also is his own people."

The same day, Kraaij, described as "head kaffir under David Buijs," announced that an appeal for help had been made to Sekwati by a chief who resented the visits of farmers in search of labour. Sekwati pleaded the impossibility of helping him in person, but encouraged the chief to make his own defence. An ominous sign was Kraaij's statement that all the native tribes north of the Olifants River were conspiring to murder any white man who set foot in their territory.

The reported appearance of small bodies of armed natives on farms within the boundary led to another scare and a "special sitting"[2] of the Volksraad on the 4th May. There was evidently considerable apprehension of a native invasion, and the Raad laid down special precautions to be observed. They can be regarded as typical of what must often have happened in those troubled times. The residents of the farther districts were to put themselves into small laagers under the command of the local field cornet, and hold themselves in readiness for any action that might be taken by the central authority. Farmers who had settled at a distance were warned to come back to the village, and those who had no land for sowing were informed that they might obtain it in the neighbourhood of Ohrigstad. Armed natives belonging to the tribes[3] of Marabie, Maliete, Majana or Maszetoe who were discovered within the limits of the Republic

[1] Another version of the name of Umzilikazi.
[2] Volksraad Minutes.
[3] The name of Marabie has been perpetuated in Marabastad, a village a few miles south of Pietersburg. Professor Norton identified Maliete with Moledshi, a chief living in the neighbourhood in which Pietersburg was founded.

might be fired on at sight. An unarmed native belonging to these tribes was to be handed over to the authorities, and if he attempted to escape might be shot. Evidently the implication was that any unattached native wandering about the land of white men could be there to no good purpose. A third clause decreed that those returning from the other side of the Olifants River, that is from hunting expeditions, should travel in parties instead of singly. In true official fashion the Volksraad announced that it did not intend to alarm any one unnecessarily, and only wished to discover the identity of three European hunters whom Sekwati reported to have been killed in the territory adjoining his own.

In spite of these precautions no native war followed, probably because the chiefs were unable to suppress their private differences sufficiently to combine. It may be that the farmers, naturally very uneasy in their minds, were inclined to exaggerate the ill will entertained for them by the Kaffirs and the prospect of their taking action. Raids were carried out by one or two small commandos, but nothing of any importance came about.

In any case reflection tempered the vigour of the Volksraad's first intentions. Possibly, too, the difficulty of determining the tribe of a hostile native in time to shoot him may have led to some modification of the law. Fresh legislation[1] with regard to vagrants was passed a few days later. No Kaffir who was not attached to a chief might wander armed through the territory of the farmers. All those who belonged to a definite tribe might be disarmed by the first person to meet them. A " traitor " found among them was to be surrendered to the authorities, and any Kaffir who attempted flight was to be shot. After fourteen days, during which time notice was to be given to the chiefs of the neighbourhood, a Kaffir arrested in arms was not only to be deprived of his weapons, but also to be handed over to the field cornet for a good drubbing, and to be indentured to a farmer for the period of a year. Again any native who took to flight was to be shot, and it is curious to notice how the Raads, both of Natal and Ohrigstad, seem to have objected to the native who took to his heels when challenged.

[1] Volksraad Minutes: 15 May, 1846. This is a meeting of the full Raad, while the earlier was only a " provisional sitting."

It is doubtful to what extent this law was ever carried out. Like a good deal of Trekker legislation it would only be practicable with a large police force and a closely settled population, neither of which the struggling Republic possessed. The farmers themselves were not likely to proceed to extremes. Even if they did not fear the revenge that the Kaffirs might exact upon their persons, their need of labour would keep them on good terms with the chiefs as long as possible. In theory, however, the regulations remained in force, since " the law concerning the shooting of the kaffirs of Sekwati " was formally repealed[1] by the united Volksraads of Potchefstroom and Ohrigstad on 15th March, 1853, and his subjects were then allowed to hire themselves out to farmers in the district of Lydenburg. The chief had been attacked and defeated a short while before by a commando under Potgieter, and the Volksraad evidently considered it safe to allow his tribesmen to move about in the Lydenburg District.

The laws against vagrancy were perhaps neither so drastic nor so arbitrary as might appear at first sight. The life of the ordinary native was centred in his kraal, from which he did not move except on hunting expeditions. The farmers, on the other hand, suffered considerably from small bodies of natives, content usually with carrying off cattle, but who sometimes committed murder in order to lessen the risk of pursuit. A small body of natives roaming about the white man's territory was suspect, so the Volksraad might argue, in much the same way as a stranger discovered wandering by night through the grounds of a private house.

The farmers took the best means they could devise both to punish suspects and discourage imitators. The clause " unattached to some chief " is important, as it excluded from the operation of the more drastic clauses native labourers who were going to or returning from the farms. These were required to obtain written authority from their chief on the one journey and from their late employer on the other, and hence would pass unmolested. It is noticeable too, that the regulations were directed particularly against natives who were caught carrying arms.

The Ohrigstad Republic seems to have been less successful even than the old Cape Colony in securing its large, thinly inhabited

[1] Volksraad Minutes.

area from incursion and penetration. When in the end the power of Sekukuni was broken he was defeated by an army composed largely of regular troops and financed from outside the country.

The " external policy " of Ohrigstad differs from that of Natal in that no attempt was made to destroy the independence of the tribes or still less to subvert the tribal organization. Circumstances forced the farmers to recognize the chiefs as sovereign princes, capable of alienating their land as they pleased. It was only later that the acquisition of arms by the tribes caused the adoption of a new policy of interference, which gradually developed to its logical end in direct supervision.

The other side of native policy in Ohrigstad was concerned with the treatment of natives whose homes lay within the boundary of the Republic. They seem to have been of the same type as those encountered in Natal and the Western Transvaal, refugees, scattered kraals and small tribes who preferred the rule of the farmers to that of Sekwati or Mannekoos. None of the greater tribes was included.

An attempt[1] to deal with this problem was made by the Volksraad on the 7th March, 1849. At this session Buijs was appointed " opperhoofd of groote Captain "[2] over all the native tribes within the limits of the Republic of Ohrigstad, except on the side of the Zoutpansbergen,[3] where his authority was to run only so far as he could enforce it. He was to be answerable to the Raad alone, and was thus practically independent of control.

This Buijs, who appears with notorious frequency in the early history of the Transvaal, was the son of a degenerate adventurer of a type that is not uncommon when Europeans first come in contact with native races. Coenraad Buijs had fled from the Cape Colony to Kaffirland in the early days of the Nineteenth Century, and collected a gang of cut-throat scoundrels of diverse races and colours, which wandered about the interior, profiting by its unsettled state, and a terror to peaceful tribes. Buijs modelled his rule upon native lines, established a harem of native women—one of his wives was sister to Gaika, chief of the AmaXosa—and

[1] R. ad 169 a./49.
[2] Literally " upperhead or great captain."
[3] The Republic's own limits were vague on this side.

left a son as heir to his chieftainship. The latter carried on the family tradition and engaged later in the Delagoa Bay slave trade.

The younger Buijs fixed his headquarters in the Zoutpansbergen, and the early trekkers found him useful as an interpreter and go-between in their dealings with the natives. As early as 1841 Potgieter had described him as "very useful on account of his knowledge of native languages," and he appears as the Republic's ambassador in its negotiations with Sekwati. He was not universally popular with the whites, as appears from the complaint[1] of a certain Piet van der Westhuijzen that "the half breed Kaffir Buijs interferes too much in the affairs of the Burghers," and the reproof administered to him by the Raad. In 1847 he seems to have broken with Potgieter and appealed to the Volksraad for protection. The latter granted[2] him a farm and promised its patronage provided he gave evidence of loyalty and good behaviour.

Buijs, however, was a brigand born. His plundering raids extended from one side of the Transvaal territory to the other, and both official records and travellers' stories give glimpses of his career. Five days after his appointment by the Volksraad Livingstone wrote[3] from Kuruman to say that he had visited a tribe just beyond the western border of the Transvaal which had recently been raided, where he was told that "a son of Conrad Buijs was among the marauders." In 1849 the Acting Landdrost of Lijdenburg reported[4] that the tribes beyond "the mountains" on the Portuguese border—that is in what is now known as the Low Country—were being harried by some one believed to be Buijs.

It is hard to believe that his character was unknown to the farmers who appointed him to a post that placed the native population at his mercy, and who supported him faithfully when his thieving instincts got him into trouble. Nothing was done until his recklessness threatened complications with the Portuguese, and even then the Volksraad treated him with marked tenderness. His promotion must have been intended partly as a reward for past services, but it is complicated by the quarrel with Potgieter. The Raad may have had some idea of counteracting the influence

[1] Volksraad Minutes, 22 January, 1846.
[2] Volksraad Minutes, 12 March, 1847.
[3] L.M.S., Kuruman, 17 March, 1847.
[4] V.R. 83/49.

of the Commandant with the native population. There is something to be said for the appointment of a " Superintendent of Natives," as Buijs's post was sometimes called, but the installation of a wolf as shepherd was a strange expedient.

The official announcement does not define the position at all exactly. Buijs was certainly to be in charge of any small kraals situate within the European area, but what would be his relations with independent chiefs of the type of Mapoch and Sekwati? They would certainly not have reckoned themselves in any way subject to Ohrigstad, yet their land was within the area acquired by the treaty with Mswazi, and a petition dated a few months later seems to regard them as dependent in some way upon the Republic. Probably the matter was left vague of set purpose. For the time being the independence of the tribes would be conceded, but should circumstances ever make it possible for the Raad to extend its influence the Superintendent of Natives would claim jurisdiction.

The vagueness of the affair, though studied, was a great defect, and Buijs was merely encouraged in his usual habits[1] by the absence of any geographical limit to his power. It is hardly surprising that the experiment accomplished nothing, and the post of Superintendent became merely a mask for plundering raids upon petty kraals that were too weak to resist.

One body of public opinion expressed itself in a petition[2] drawn up at Krugerspost on the 19th September, 1849, which complained of the " impudence and obstinacy " of Mapoch and Sekwati. The petitioners pressed for a military attack upon the two chiefs and a policy of subjugation for the future. They proposed the appointment of an official " over " the tribes, who should be empowered to deal with their complaints, and enable their European neighbours to live in peace without the constant threat of native war. They seem to have wished for the appointment of a permanent official who could deal out of hand with any disputes that arose with the natives, without the delay of waiting for the next Volksraad meeting; and perhaps without the risk of a provocative policy being dictated by that assembly.

[1] For some notice of his doings see R. 119/47, R. 119a/47, R. 121b/47, etc.
[2] V.R. 80/49.

It looks rather as if Potgieter's supporters were hoping for the appointment of their leader, but the Volksraad took no notice, and Buijs continued at his post. He had no influence over the real dangers to the state—Mapoch and Sekwati—and made use of his position to continue his raids. The report[1] of the Landdrost of Lydenburg, quoted above, shows that the Boers must have known of his doings.

A climax was reached in 1850 when the Portuguese complained that he had attacked and murdered eight Kaffirs, the representatives of " Senhor Boda Cassima " of Delagoa Bay. The name has an Arab sound, and he is probably to be identified with " the Portuguese or Moorish trader Boda " who figures in another Volksraad resolution.[2] A special committee of the United Volksraad was appointed[3] on the 6th March, 1850, to enquire into the allegations. It reported (on May 20th) that Buijs ought no longer to be recognized as Chief Captain of all the natives within the limits of the Republic, but only of such as chose to accept him. They recommended further that he should be subordinated to the Landdrost of Lydenburg, at whose disposal he should hold both himself and his followers. The Committee certainly stated that it had not been influenced by the charge of murder laid against him by the Portuguese, but its formal acquittal was probably an attempt to shield Buijs, through fear of the responsibility that might attach to the Republic for the actions of one of its representatives.

Buijs was thus reduced from the position of a semi-independent vassal, responsible only to the Volksraad, the highest authority of the Republic, to the level of a petty headman subject to its ordinary officials, in this case the district landdrost. Later on he figures as " field cornet " of natives, while a Portuguese Albassini appears as the " Superintendent."

The appointment of Buijs was almost the last public act of the Republic of Ohrigstad, and the political situation deserves a brief review. When Potgieter in 1844 declared himself independent of Natal before moving next year to Ohrigstad he did not take with him the whole body of emigrants, neither did the district of Potchefstroom long lie waste. It was filled almost at once

[1] V.R. 83/49 and page 67 above. [2] Volksraad Minutes, 8 June, 1846.
[3] Volksraad Minutes.

by farmers from Natal under A. W. J. Pretorius, whose Republic of Natal had recently surrendered to the British. The two settlements remained independent of one another for some time, and there sprung up a rivalry between the two leaders that could date its origins from the first days of the Trek. It was not helped, probably, by Potgieter's realization that Pretorius had been successful against Dingaan where he himself had given up the struggle in despair.

Meanwhile the settlement at Ohrigstad was not happy. Potgieter's domineering ways alienated a number of his supporters who called themselves the "Volksraad party" and formed an opposition that might be described as "constitutionalist" as opposed to the personal rule of the Head Commandant. The dispute actually led to an exchange of shots, though apparently not to bloodshed.[1] In 1849 the Volksraad party was strong enough to cut itself adrift from Potgieter and to unite with the party that had followed Pretorius to Potchefstroom. The first meeting of the United Volksraad was held at Derdepoort in May of that year, but Potgieter refused to acknowledge its authority, and retired with the remnant of his followers to Zoutpansberg.

The rest of the political history of the Transvaal may be dismissed in few words. In 1852 Pretorius, though he was only the Commandant General of a single district, concluded the Sand River Convention with the British Commissioners on his own authority. Potgieter at once left his district of Zoutpansberg to challenge his action. Civil war seemed imminent but was staved off by the efforts of the elders of the church. The two rival Commandants General were reconciled, and each signed a document that conceded the authority of the Volksraad.

Both Pretorius and Potgieter died not long after, but their personal rivalry had passed into a local feud that was carried on by their successors. The former was succeeded at Potchefstroom by his son, Martinus Wessel Pretorius, and the latter in Zoutpansberg by Stephanus Schoeman.[2] After some years of negotiation a written Grondwet or Constitution was compiled and promulgated. In 1858 the younger Pretorius was elected President and Schoeman Commandant General.

[1] See P. P. England, 1849, xxxvi. p. 478.
[2] Potgieter's son, P. G. Potgieter, was his direct successor, but was killed shortly after in the attack upon Makapan.

This is the date that has been chosen for the close of the chapter, but it was by no means the end of the dispute. The compromise of 1858 was not accepted, and years of internal strife followed. Independent Republics sprang up at Zoutpansberg in the north, Lydenberg (the new capital of the old Ohrigstad district)[1] in the east and Utrecht in the south. Serio-comic civil wars were waged and government came to an end. The native tribes, which had never been crushed, began to contemplate independence. The Transvaal settlement—it cannot be called a state—appeared to be on the verge of annihilation. This unrest, continuing without a break for twenty years, was the most plausible reason for Shepstone's annexation of the Transvaal in 1877.

[1] Ohrigstad had been abandoned on account of the malaria.

CHAPTER V.

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN REPUBLIC.

In 1849 the Union of Derdepoort was consummated, and Potgieter retired in high dudgeon to Zoutpansberg. The date marks the beginning of a new period in the history of the Transvaal territory. Thenceforward the white community might make some claim to be regarded as a state, ruling over a wide area, and three years later it was formally recognized by Her Majesty's Government. Before the Union there had been merely a few isolated groups scattered about the country, with little more discipline than a walking tour or a picnic party.

A change comes over the records in 1849. From that date they are representative of the whole Transvaal, and the centre of interest shifts from the dubious valleys of Ohrigstad to the western frontier, where the missions of the London Society were creeping northwards among the tribes that lived along the fringe of the desert. The papers of the government at Potchefstroom before 1849 have disappeared, and thus we know nothing of events in the western districts before that date. From the missionary side we hear in a vague sort of way of field cornets and commandants, and of meetings of a Volksraad, but nothing definite is forthcoming. The historian is obliged to make a fresh start with 1849.

The first tendency of the newly unified state was to fall back on the old policy of a clear line of demarcation between black and white. Complaints of encroachment came continually from either side, and while the native complained of brigandage the white farmer grumbled about cattle theft. The first meeting of the United Volksraad shows the community face to face with all the old problems.

In May, 1849, a resolution[1] was passed that warned the chiefs of native tribes not to allow their people to enter the territory

[1] See Volksraad Minutes for the respective dates.

occupied by the farmers without first obtaining permission from the neighbouring commandant. At the meeting held on January 22nd, 1850, a commission was appointed[1] to proceed to the Marico district to settle certain boundary questions that had arisen between the emigrants and the natives.

These restrictions on natives find a counterpart in the agreement of the 17th March, 1852, that reconciled, temporarily at any rate, those uncompromising enemies A. W. J. Pretorius and A. H. Potgieter. The clause baldly states that no field cornet or private person (that is no one under the rank of Commandant) should be allowed to interfere with a Kaffir from any kraal. The visits of farmers to kraals were usually connected with the need for labour, and the object of the clause was partly to protect the native from ill-usage, but it was probably intended quite as much as a safeguard to white men. Where one kidnapping gang had raided, the next European visitors were likely to receive but a doubtful welcome,[2] and innocent whites must have suffered for the offences of their brethren. The clause had the further advantage of requiring all matters concerning the natives of any district to pass through the hands of a responsible official, who might be called to account for any irregularity. Unfortunately this excellent provision remained a dead letter, and even its relaxation to include field cornets did not put a bar to intercourse. For those days, perhaps, it was a counsel of perfection rather than a piece of practical politics.

Pretorius at any rate tried to carry out his share of the bargain, and issued instructions to his commandants. A copy of those addressed to Commandant J. J. Jacobs on 7th May, 1852, fell into the hands of Mr. Helmore, one of the London Society's missionaries, who forwarded a translation[3] to his headquarters. It was a happy chance, as no copy survives in the Pretoria Archives. Pretorius's instructions delegated power to the Commandant of each district to deal with the natives on behalf of the government " as justice, quietness and peace may require." He was given the sole right to make treaties within his area, and was bidden to act " in the most prudent manner, so that no offence

[1] See Volksraad Minutes for the respective dates.

[2] *C.f.*, the case of the murder of the Potgieters at Makapan's.

[3] L. M. S., Likhatlong, July 12, 1853.

shall be given to Black or White." He was to be answerable for his actions to the Krijgsraad or War Council, and at its meetings was to furnish a report on the progress of native affairs in his district.

There still survives, somewhat mutilated, a letter[1] to Commandant Scholtz of the border district of Marico, giving him instructions for the regulation of native affairs. The letter was dated the 30th June, 1853, and was concerned with the familiar problem of the vagrant. One of the oldest issues in South African native policy was raised by those natives, whether refugees in the true sense of the word, or merely lawless vagabonds, who wandered about the country, at times taking service with the farmers, at others plundering their cattle. Commandant Scholtz was to distinguish between the " old kraals," those that is that had been in existence at the time of the Trek, and the settlements of families that had merely " squatted " on vacant land after the establishment of the Republic. Those Kaffirs " which do not belong to the old kraals " were to be sent back without delay to the villages whence they had come. The Commandant was also charged with the duty of dealing with all cases connected with native servants in his ward.

Five years later, when the new Instructions to Field Cornets[2] received the sanction of the Volksraad in 1858, the duties of which Commandant Scholtz had been notified became part of the regular business of a field cornet. In all probability, however, they had been performed by field cornets for some time, since most of the duties of the Commandant were delegated in practice to the junior officials.

The Instructions of 1858 made each field cornet responsible for seeing that every native in his ward was either employed in the service of some white man, or under the control of a recognized chief, either of whom would be a sort of guarantee of regular employment and good behaviour. The enactment, directed of course against vagrancy, is interesting, partly because it contains the germ of the present Pass Law, and partly because the Boer method of dealing with the difficulty was practically a re-discovery of the system of feudal times which required every man to be under the jurisdiction of a lord. In 1858 the field cornet was

[1] R. 410/52. [2] Lokale Wetten der Z.A.R., p. 97.

also made responsible for the supervision of all kraals that were situate within his district. He thus became the local agent of the government in its dealings with the tribes.

At first sight the administration of native affairs by the military authority may seem strange. The obvious explanation, that the relations of the farmers with the natives were usually of a military nature, is not the whole truth. In point of fact the elected military authorities were the only officials that the Republic possessed, and their origin was far more popular than military. The field cornets and their superiors the Commandants were local representatives chosen by the voters of their districts. They therefore received an increasing burden of civil routine work. The Krijgsraad or War Council was the only standing committee that existed and gradually assumed many of the functions of an executive. The Commandant General became something of a Prime Minister and President combined. When a body of local officials was required for the administration of native affairs, the Volksraad naturally turned to those already in existence, and any new duties arising out of its regulations devolved upon the Commandants and field cornets. The Commandant General almost from the first had been a sort of Minister for Native Affairs.

But the ideal of demarcation between white and black proved to be impracticable. From the very first the two races were inextricably confused, geographically, economically and politically, and soon even the Volksraad was forced to admit the facts. A puzzling regulation which bears upon the relations between the two comes in the minutes for the 19th September, 1849. "No one," the Volksraad resolved, "shall have the right to own a Kaffir kraal beyond the Berg, or elsewhere than on his own farm."

Two explanations seem possible. It was not unusual in the early days of expansion in South Africa for a white man to place himself at the head of a few native families and to be acknowledged as their chief. The establishments of Biggar and Dunn at Port Natal were of this nature, as were those of Albassini and the Buijs family in the interior. It is possible that some of the later comers were following their example and that this led to the passing of the law.

On the other hand, it may be that, in a manner again reminiscent of the Dark Ages, petty captains anxious to obtain the

protection of a powerful farmer "commended" themselves to him in something like feudal fashion. The favour of any farmer in the country could easily be gained by the guarantee of a regular supply of labour, but it is hard to see what a farmer had to offer that was worth the surrender of independence.

The "country beyond the Berg", the "Low Country" of the present day, still contains a large native population, whose ancestors were harried by Buijs, Albassini and the Portuguese slave dealers. By "owning a kraal on his farm" the Volksraad probably referred to the custom, common at the present day, by which a farmer leases land to a native family to be worked, either on shares, or in return for stipulated labour services. This was harmless enough, but control over a kraal situate many miles away, whatever its pretext, was plainly dangerous and the desire of the Raad to suppress the custom is clearly justified.

The tentative policy of the farmers in the direction of separation broke down inevitably when they persisted in their demand for native labour. It was the obvious solution of their difficulties eighty years ago, but had they definitely adopted a white labour policy modern problems would have been considerably simpler. As it was they made no attempt. At first cheap labour was obtained from the surrounding tribes without incurring any responsibilites. Facts, however, were too strong, and every fresh enactment shows the farmers pushed steadily if slowly into assuming fresh authority over the native races. It is easy to trace in the records the gradual development of Boer native policy in the direction of subjugation and the assumption of direct control.

The reconciliation of Potgieter and Pretorius, which was quoted above to illustrate the policy of demarcation, contained a provision which shows that it could never have been complete. Appended to the document is a list of the various Kaffir kraals within the jurisdiction of each field cornetcy, indicating the presence of a large native population settled among the farmers.

The number of kraals in Boer territory tended to increase. The peace and security offered by European rule attracted small and weak fragments of tribes to surrender their independence in return for the privilege of settling within the domains and under the protection of the Republic. An example may be found in the Raad minutes for the 21st November, 1853, when the Volksraad

discussed the general principle of allowing natives to settle within its boundaries. After debate the Raad decided to grant lands to natives on a perpetual lease, to be occupied by them and their descendants so long as the " quit-rent " continued to be paid. The idea of a quit-rent was almost certainly borrowed from the system of land tenure introduced into Cape Colony in Cradock's time, though it seems probable that the commodity in which the native paid their rent was labour. Here then is one of the constituents of the " Labour Tax."

Permission to settle within the Republic might be granted for a limited period only. In 1845 or 1846 the Bahurutse, who had suffered from the attacks of Korannas and of the Batlapin under Mahura, were compelled to leave their territory. To travel far in one stage when burdened with their cattle and all their worldly possessions being out of the question, they applied[1] to the farmers to be allowed to settle on Transvaal territory on their way. Permission was granted them to remain for one year. They were ostensibly journeying to a new settlement in the north and at the end of the year were reminded by the Boer officials of the terms of their lease, and politely—but firmly—moved on.

Gradually the farmers came to be recognized as suzerains by tribes with which at first they had had little to do. In the case of contact between two races, the one civilized and the other in a backward condition, the latter invariably comes to recognize the superiority of the more civilized nation and ends finally in subservience. The strict equity of the proceeding is not really to the point. Though the moralist may have a good deal to say, the historian must be content to take his facts as he finds them.

A common line of development is through the intervention of Europeans in native disputes, sometimes in the capacity of arbitrators. Moral support given to one party may make all the difference to the quarrel. From the settlement of a dispute the way is easy to the enforcement of an award, and thence to the direct assumption of authority.

Somcuba, acting as regent to Mswazi, has already been noticed[2] in connection with the " purchase " of the land round Ohrigstad from his ward. A few years later the inevitable quarrel had broken out and Somcuba and his ward, whom the records now render as

[1] Letter from Edwards, L.M.S., Mabotsa, 4 May, 1847. [2] Page 60 above.

"Sincoeba" and "Omme-Zway," were at open variance. The farmers could hardly tolerate the unsettled state of affairs on their border, and there was a chance of fishing in troubled waters. On the 13th June, 1853, a committee was appointed,[1] ostensibly to bring about an agreement between the two disputants.

There is no trace of its deliberations, but a treaty[2] exists that was concluded between the "Members of the Krijgsraad of the African Republic sitting at Lijdenburg on the 5th November, 1853 in the name of the Volksraad, on one side, and Sincoeba as Captain of a Kaffir tribe of Zulu race, on the other." By it Somcuba formally denounced his allegiance to his former chief Mswazi and accepted the Volksraad in his place, promising, and the words are significant, to render to it the same obedience "that is due from a subordinate chief to his King." He bound himself to obey the orders of the Raad and its officials, and undertook not to make war on any other tribe.

The Landdrost of Lydenburg was then assigned the task of finding Somcuba a suitable situation on the Crocodile River, authority being given by a Volksraad resolution of the 6th November, 1854. He was somewhat naïvely told that a particular recommendation of the spot would be the absence of any caves or holes. The implication is quite clear, in view of the recent fate of the tribe of Makapan.[3]

The growing influence of the Boers is indicated by their attempts to put down private war between the various tribes. Here undoubtedly that influence was for the good of the country. In 1849 the missionary Edwards noted[4] that the emigrants had determined to put down war among the natives, and in 1851 another, Ross of Likhatlong, recorded[5] the punishment of a chief who had infringed the law. Mahura, one of those border chiefs dependent in some way upon the Republic, was a perpetual nuisance to the surrounding tribes and had attacked and defeated one of his neighbours. The Boers thereupon sentenced him to pay a fine of 2,070 head of cattle for shedding blood on lands belonging to the Republic, and ordered him to present himself before the Volksraad on a given day. If he failed to appear to

[1] Volksraad Minutes. [2] Soutter Collection (Pretoria) Packet VI, No. 2
[3] See page 164 below. [4] L.M.S., Mabotsa, 15 January, 1849.
[5] L.M.S., Likhatlong, 4 August, 1851.

answer for his actions he was told to expect to be treated as an enemy. Interference with an individual's expression of his natural fighting instincts is perhaps the longest single step in the direction of control. Certainly the movement for international peace in Europe has not progressed so far.

In 1853 the Republic concluded a treaty[1] with Umzilikazi which, though it can have been of little practical effect, illustrates its policy when dealing with one of the greater tribes. It was arranged by the Acting Commandant of Zoutpansberg (another instance of the Commandant General as the representative of the Government in native affairs) and a "Captain" named Marati. The latter was described as "van de stam der Kaffers Koning Mazelikatze door geze zijne Koning daartoe geauthoriseerd," but if Umzilikazi did not mean to treat the agreement seriously he may have been merely a chief of lesser rank whose only duty was to lull the farmers into a sense of security. The treaty was signed at Zoutpansberg on the 8th January, 1853.

After announcing the establishment of peace between the South African Republic and Umzilikazi the treaty prohibits the traffic in firearms, and Umzilikazi undertakes to send dealers in contraband to the nearest landdrost. There is to be free trade in everything else and the chief promises to assist all hunters and traders belonging to the Republic. A provision which is of considerable interest binds the chief to appear with his warriors should he be called upon by the Commandant General. The final clause settles that disputes between one of the emigrant farmers and a native should be decided by the Commandant General or by a court of landdrost and heemraaden, sitting either with or without a jury. In all cases an appeal should lie to the Volksraad.

It may be doubted whether the treaty was ever taken seriously by either side. Umzilikazi was too powerful a chief and his territory too far away for its provisions ever to be practicable, but at least it illustrates the policy of the farmers in dealing with a large tribe, or perhaps with any whose tribal organization was still in a workable condition. They retained as much of that organization as possible and accepted no responsibility for internal administration or the ordinary duties of government. The Boers were most concerned in prohibiting the trade in firearms, and this

[1] R. 483/53.

came first in the treaty under discussion. It was the guiding principle of their policy. In Umzilikazi's treaty arrangements were also made for the settlement of disputes, though the chief can hardly have intended to surrender his judicial powers so completely into the hands of strangers. The securing of trading and hunting privileges was another obvious concession to be gained by treaty.

On the question of tribute the policy of the farmers was not always the same. In some cases treated below it was assessed at the provision of a certain number of labourers for fourteen days every year. If there was any reason for paying a compliment to a particular chief, such as the friendly Moroka, he was declared to be a " burgher " of the Republic and was then liable only to the ordinary citizen's duty of serving upon commando. Levies of native troops usually accompanied the farmers' expeditions. They were often used as servants and carriers but occasionally took part in an action.[1]. This was the duty imposed upon Umzilikazi. He would most certainly have declined to supply labourers, while there would have been endless occasions of friction even if he had consented. The question of tribute was therefore shelved by means of a vague promise of military assistance which need mean nothing at all, and which a Commandant General would be reluctant to enforce.

To send an army when called upon does, in cold black and white, seem like an act of submission, but the treaty was concluded by word of mouth, and the clause, as represented to Umzilikazi's ambassador, may have sounded more like a vague promise of assistance in a mutually defensive alliance. On the other hand the written word would have proved extremely useful should later events have made direct assumption of power at all possible.

In dealing with small tribes and isolated kraals another policy was required than that of the mere recognition of a chief. It was in connection with these that the policy of direct rule was embarked upon, even before the Grondwet of 1858. Though the subjugation of the greater tribes was only to be attempted later the full cycle of native policy was already complete.

[1] Ohrigstad Volksraad Minutes, 26 September, 1845. The Raad decided that plunder should be shared equally between the " Christians " who took part in a commando and the Kaffirs.

On the 19th September, 1853, leave[1] was given to the various Commandants to reduce the smaller tribes to a position of subservience, and to compel them to pay a yearly tax to the exchequer of the state. The official explanation was that the step was taken in order to simplify the prevention of smuggling in arms and ammunition. The Commandants were trusted to use their own discretion as to the methods they employed, but were strictly forbidden to use violence. How far this prohibition was to be taken seriously is doubtful: a certain amount of "influence" was probably not precluded. In this case again it seems probable that the "annual tax" was a labour tribute, though ivory and cattle may have been demanded according to the territory in question.

The fine of over two thousand head of cattle laid upon Mahura has been noted above.[2] His tribe the Batlapin inhabited the wide pasture lands west of the border of the Republic. On the 16th December, 1847, the Krijgsraad sentenced[3] an upper-chief named Saradie to pay twenty elephant tusks within six months. The latter seems to have lived in the elephant country north of the Olifants River.

The assumption of direct control by the whites need not be regarded as an unnecessary destruction of native liberties. The old tribal system had received a severe blow at the time of the Lifaqane, and among the survivors there were numerous small kraals which contained only a few families under a petty captain. These isolated groups were independent of all control, and could not be managed, according to the established policy of the Republic, through the medium of a recognized chief. The smaller clans were reduced to subjection more as a matter of police than for any other reason. The large tribes remained independent as before. But though the measure was limited in application it is none the less interesting as rounding off the policy of gradual subjugation.

The one factor which, more than any other, forced upon the Boers the gradual destruction of native independence was their determination to put down the powder trade. This was particularly prevalent along the western border, where a large number of traders were engaged in procuring ivory, but it was by no means unknown to the Republic of Ohrigstad. The people of

[1] Volksraad Minutes. [2] Page 78. [3] Volksraad Minutes.

the Transvaal were accustomed to blame the foreign trader for the ease with which the native obtained his guns, but a traveller whose word there is no reason to doubt wrote[1] as follows : " Horses, guns and ammunition are articles the sale of which is strictly prohibited, but although they keep an exceedingly sharp lookout that Englishmen do not supply the natives with them they are not averse, on occasion, to drive a bargain in these contraband articles themselves : and to my certain knowledge great quantities of guns and ammunition are frequently exchanged by the Boers with the natives for ivory, cattle and other produce." There is also a significant resolution in the Volksraad minutes for the 15th June, 1852, which warns Commandant J. J. Jacobs that in no circumstances whatsoever may arms and horses be supplied to natives.

The prohibition of the Natal Raad was forcibly repeated[2] by that of AndriesOhrigstad on the 7th October, 1848. Kaffirs and " coloured " persons were strictly forbidden even to possess guns, horses or ammunition under penalty of banishment for a year. All trade in these articles with the native races was likewise forbidden. The prohibition must often have been evaded if the continual complaints that were received from the field cornets count for anything. According to them the tribes were continually receiving large supplies. Chapman's contention that foreign merchants were not alone responsible is confirmed by the fact that those tribes that lay outside the usual trading routes followed by strangers, as for example those that lived around the Republic of Ohrigstad, seem to have acquired firearms as rapidly as any other.

Any stranger was carefully watched for breach of the law. The Volksraad of Ohrigstad was much exercised[3] in 1846 by the arrival of a certain trader named McCabe. Information was promptly laid against him in connection with the sale of powder to natives and he was sentenced to the confiscation of all his stock in trade. Some weeks later a letter[4] was received from the chief witness against McCabe withdrawing his allegations. Since Livingstone's writings make it clear that the trader did actually

[1] Chapman: *Travels in the Interior of South Africa*, Vol. I. p. 19.
[2] R. 155a./48 and the Volksraad Minutes.
[3] Volksraad Minutes *passim*, especially March, 1846.
[4] Volksraad Minutes for the 5th November, 1846.

sell arms if he got the chance the sudden change must be attributed to the persuasive powers of his national temperament, or to some other national product carried with him on his waggons.

In point of fact the powder trade depended upon an economic truth with which the farmers could not contend. The trade in ivory was carried on by means of barter, and barter presupposes that each party to the transaction shall produce some commodity that is desired by the other. The farmers and traders wanted the ivory and cattle that the natives could supply, these in like manner desired, and the whites could supply, arms and ammunition. Once the parties were brought together it required more than a Volksraad resolution to prevent the exchange. There is a peculiar absence of the other commodity characteristic of most native trade—strong drink. The probable explanation is that the farmers did not produce it.

Several of the missionaries, Moffat and Livingstone among them, put forward the plea that the natives used their guns for quite legitimate purposes, and that they were not necessarily accumulated for use against the whites. There is some justification for this claim. On the western border in particular game was an important item in the native's food, and the competition of the European hunter was rendering their methods out of date. On the other hand the guns that they used in hunting were equally useful when they ambushed[1] Boers, and there is little doubt that the stores of arms and ammunition collected by ambitious chiefs like Sechele were never intended for hunting expeditions.

The trade in firearms resulted in a steady increase in the number held by the natives, and the Boers found themselves surrounded by a ring of hostile tribes, numerous and well armed. The authorities then embarked upon a policy of disarmament. This is an expedient that can be justified only by certain and pressing danger. It engenders resentment and ill-will, and the experience of the Cape administration in Basutoland and of Natal in the case of Langalibalele seems to show that it is seldom justified by its results. The confiscation of arms, which may appear to the stronger power simply as a legitimate exercise of police authority, from the native's point of view is sheer robbery, since he, whether

[1] See Livingstone's matter-of-fact account of the murder of McCabe's companion. The latter was "mistaken by a tribe of Barolongs for a Boer, and shot as he approached their village," *Missionary Travels and Researches*, p. 122.

the government of the white man approves or not, has himself paid a white man full market value and more for his guns.

One example is enough to illustrate the policy in operation in the Transvaal. On October 7th, 1848, field cornet Nel complained to the Volksraad of Ohrigstad that the kaffirs upon the border of his district were collecting arms and stealing horses. The Raad thereupon took two resolutions. The first decided that a " Commission " or military expedition should be directed against Malleeuw, one of the chiefs of whom Nel had most to complain, and the second was that stringent reaffirmation of the illegality of the powder trade that has been mentioned above.

The expedition set out in due course.[1] Attacked by a commando of fifty-six men, Malleeuw was compelled to surrender his store of arms, and Nel submitted a report to the Volksraad. At the kraal were discovered twenty-four muskets, five pounds of powder, eight pounds of musket balls and Rds. 54 in cash.[2] One animal identified as having been stolen was discovered and handed back to the owner. The money was distributed " in order to pay expenses," for which purpose a fine of fifty-six head of cattle was also exacted, being, presumably, one for each member of the commando. The field cornet, evidently a methodical man, recorded carefully that one ox had been slaughtered for food, and that a further " fine " of three oxen had been imposed upon the chief for an offence which he described as " illtreating the horses."

The ammunition found at the Kraal was declared confiscate and handed back to Nel by the Volksraad " to be used for the public benefit," and with this the incident closed, at least as far as the authorities were concerned. The principle of making a defeated enemy pay an indemnity was not a new one. It is found in the history of the expeditions against Dingaan and may be traced further back to the Kaffir Wars of the Eastern Frontier. It was the only way of ensuring that a sufficient number of farmers would leave their homes and stay with the commando to the end. A danger undoubtedly did exist that the payment of members in kind out of the spoil might lead to expeditions being made on frivolous pretexts, but a single head, all that they got

[1] The history of the expedition against Malleeuw is told in the Volksraad Minutes, and in R. 155a./48.
[2] About £4.

on the present occasion, cannot have been very much of a temptation.

In view of the economic facts upon which the munitions trade was based the Ohrigstad policy of disarmament was hardly successful. After the Union with Potchefstroom the matter came up again. At its first meeting the United Volksraad discussed a letter[1] received from one of the missions asking apparently for some relaxation of the prohibition against the supply of firearms. There is no evidence to determine which mission was responsible for the letter, but it is quite possible that the author was Livingstone, who criticizes the embargo in his book and mentions that he had asked the Boers for some consideration for his flock. The Raad rejected the request, deciding that the law should remain unchanged, and that natives should be allowed to possess firearms in no circumstances whatever.

On the 19th September the Raad received a complaint[2] from Buijs, on the other side of the Republic, that Mapoch and Sekwati were collecting arms and giving him trouble. No action could be taken. The two chiefs were dangerous enemies against whom a petty commando such as that which had disarmed Malleeuw would be powerless, and in dealing with the larger tribes the enactments of the Raad seem to have remained more or less a dead letter. The policy of disarmament existed none the less, and was disregarded only so long as the Republic was unable to enforce its behests.

Traders and even farmers were in the habit of supplying guns to the natives whom they sent out to hunt on their behalf. The practice was illegal, but apparently so widespread that the authorities received suggestions that they should countenance the issue of a certain number of guns for legitimate purposes. There is a modern parallel in the proposals made from time to time that the Liquor Laws that prohibit the sale of alcoholic liquors to natives should be relaxed to permit the issue of small quantities under Government safeguards. The proposal to license " Kaffir shots " was discussed on the 5th May, 1851, but the final decision was postponed until the meeting of the 30th May.[3] The Raad then decided that the attitude of the Kaffirs was too threatening to permit of any relaxation.

[1] Volksraad Minutes, 23 May, 1849. [2] Volksraad Minutes. [3] Volksraad Minutes.

For all that the prohibition was openly disregarded in the district of Zoutpansberg. The method, followed even by the important ivory traders and due perhaps to the hostility of the tribes, was to arm natives known as " Kaffir shots " and to send them out on hunting expeditions to bring in what they could. Dr. Brookes shows[1] that this was actually done by the petty Republic of Lydenburg in 1857 in order to increase the revenue. It is said that these Kaffir shots were sometimes used to raid kraals and carry off children, but this side of their activities is discussed below.

The receiving of presents from natives continued in the Transvaal. Sometimes the gift took the form of a few tusks of ivory, but the chiefs soon discovered that the inexpensive gift of a few " orphans " (officially certified by themselves to be such) easily won the friendship of their new neighbours. On the 20th May, 1850, the United Volksraad absolutely forbade[2] private individuals to receive gifts from natives under a penalty of a fine of Rds. 150,[3] of which a third was to go to the informer. If the recipient could prove that what looked like a present was really of the nature of a *quid pro quo* in return for definite services rendered to the donor, the " gift " and its attendant circumstances were to be registered with the landdrost. Officials were allowed to accept gifts, but since these came to them in their public capacity the proceeds were to be paid into revenue and the facts of the case reported to the landdrost.

The new law can hardly have been popular, and the practical difficulties in the way of its enforcement led to widespread infraction, but the intentions of the Raad were clear enough. The danger was realized and steps taken to anticipate it, though with what success may be imagined. Sometimes, however, the Raad was able to enforce its policy, as the Landdrost of Lydenburg found to his cost later in the year.[4] He applied for permission to retain for his own use an " orphan " who had been given him by " Oma-Zwasie " as a personal mark of esteem (so he said) and not in his capacity as landdrost. The Raad would have none of it, and he was bidden sharply to give the orphan up and to apprentice him to a farmer in the way prescribed by law.

[1] *History of Native Policy*, p. 415. [2] Volksraad Minutes. [3] About £11 5*s*.
[4] Volksraad Minutes, 24th August, 1850.

A final enactment, rather of the nature of a police regulation, but interesting as foreshadowing a later development of policy, is to be found in the " Drank Wet "[1] of 1858. The sale of strong drink was prohibited to any native servant, except upon the written authority of his master. The importance attached to the ban may be judged from the penalty prescribed, which was a fine, fairly high for those days, of three pounds for each offence.

It is now possible to pass the whole of Transvaal policy in review. Two conflicting tendencies were at work. The first was the natural inclination of the white race, confronted by the enormous masses of barbarism, to draw as hard a line as possible between the two groups. The chiefs at first were recognized as independent princes, and the little states set themselves to securing their territory from penetration by the natives. Soon the two problems of the provision of labour and the embargo upon the trade in arms and ammunition forced the Boers into closer relations with the tribes. They assumed first a modified overlordship and later actual control. This tendency is seen at work in the regulations prohibiting gun-running, enforcing disarmament, and finally authorizing the assumption of direct supervision over the smaller kraals.

The new policy was considerably assisted by the disorganization of native life caused by the generation of wars that preceded the Trek. Many of the natives seem to have accepted the rule of the farmers, if not with satisfaction at least with equanimity. At the same time those greater tribes whose tribal system survived the time of trouble, the Basuto, the Swazis and the Zulu, did not come under the rule of the Boers and still owe only a modified allegiance to white government. In the north and north-western Transvaal the same tendency is illustrated by the great reserves, many of them still bearing the name of a chief contemporary with the Trek, which remain to show that the policy of subjugation was not completely successful even within the boundaries of the Republic.

One side of the relations between farmers and natives remains to be told. This is what might be called social policy, the general attitude adopted by the whites over against the natives. Though

[1] *Lokale Wetten der Z.A.R.* p. 75.

there is not much evidence in the records the policy is not difficult to define.

The fundamental postulate of Boer native policy was that the native was an inferior being,[1] absolutely precluded from receiving political privileges. The possibility of admitting him to equality, whether economic, political or social, was unthinkable, and, not being evolutionists, the farmers were untroubled by any speculations as to whether the disability might not in time be removed. Their attitude of mind was not the result of any conviction carefully argued out from evidence, nor was there any feeling of ill-will for the inferior race; the established order was accepted calmly as an absolutely unchallengeable matter of fact. In his magnificent acceptance of the principle of the aristocracy of birth the Boer farmer had much in common with the nobleman of the *Ancien Régime*.

Some idea of what this meant may be gathered from a passage in the Grondwet of 1858 which laid down, as one of the basic principles of the Consititution, that "the people desire to permit no equality between coloured people and the white inhabitants of the country, either in Church or State."[2] The policy of excluding all natives from any share in the government was extended to all who had any share of native blood. The "coloured population," to give it its modern name, was not particularly large, but the Thirty Three Articles, a Potchefstroom constitution of 1844, include the following clause: "No persons of mixed race shall be able to sit in our meetings as member or judge, down to the tenth degree."[3]

To those who maintain that political discrimination on the ground of colour is both unscientific and unjust some defence may yet be pleaded. No one will deny that the Boers exceeded the grounds of moderate caution in the dogmatism of their attitude, or that the obstinate refusal of many modern South Africans to listen to reason is quite undefensible, yet in the end the colour bar was not without justification. Its differentiation was not based on a mere æsthetic preference for creamy pink to brownish black. At bottom it was a test of civilization. The white race,

[1] "It is not so much their (the slaves) freedom that drove us to such lengths as their being placed on an equal footing with Christians"—Anna Steenkamp (Retief's daughter), quoted in Bird's *Annals*, I, 459.

[2] Eybers, *Select Documents*, p. 364. [3] *Ibid*, p. 350.

anxious to preserve its own peculiar culture, was compelled to exclude from its society anything that might possibly confuse it with surrounding barbarism. Of this, colour was a rough and ready test.

In the past ignorant white people have laid a totally meaningless emphasis upon colour. It is true, too, that there are many members of the little white aristocracy in South Africa to-day whose sole claim to consideration is based upon the accidental colour of their skin. In the future an increase of native culture may render the colour bar obsolete, but in the days of the Trek it served its purpose. Perhaps its most striking work was to prevent that mingling of the races that was not unknown in the first century and a half of the history of the Cape, which weakened the Latin colonial empires, and practically submerged their civilization.

The position of the Boers must also be considered. A little group of whites was endeavouring to consolidate its position in the midst of native tribes. Their whole outlook was thus dominated by the fear of being submerged. The natives were already under the rule of their chiefs and it was long before the Republic numbered any appreciable native population. The question of mutual relations scarcely arose. Finally, even if the farmers had been prepared to admit the Kaffir to equal citizenship, the latter was still completely uncivilized, and quite unprepared for the elaborate machinery of European methods of government. To this day the usual answer of the South African to the problem of the political rights of the native races is to picture the conjunction of the ballot box with the savage from the kraal in all the panoply of his ceremonial dress. The contrast appeals to him as essentially ludicrous.

CHAPTER VI.

THE MISSIONARIES.[1]

The missionaries are bound up inextricably with Boer native policy. The antagonism between the South African farmer and what he considered to be missionary ideals was of long standing, and can be traced back to the Cape Colony in the years before the great migration. Whatever the cause of their unpopularity, it must be postulated at the very beginning of the discussion that the missionaries, with few exceptions, were men of the most unquestionable honesty of character and loftiness of ideals. Vulgar abuse of the sort that is sometimes heard on political platforms of the present day recoils only on the head of the person unscrupulous enough to use it. The life offered nothing to the self-seeker. After the long voyage to South Africa and the discomforts of the monotonous journey into the interior the missionary had nothing to look forward to but poverty, loneliness, sickness, and, worst of all, an awful sense of the hopeless immensity of the task.

Yet it is the wonder of South African history that these devoted men should have failed to command the affection of their European neighbours and differed from them completely on the one subject that they had in common—native policy. Much may be attributed to the selfishness of the farmer, but he was not alone to blame. Most of the missionaries arrived in the country with their opinions fixed on crucial questions and lacking the elasticity to adapt their ready-made policy. The most enthusiastic supporter of the missonary work of the present day can hardly defend all that was said and done a hundred years ago, and it is one of the tragedies of South African history that so much faithful service should have been crippled by the unfortunate policy adopted by the earlier missionary leaders.

Protestant missions are a comparatively new development. They always lacked something of the fervour and the enterprise of

[1] On the "Exeter Hall" point of view the reader is referred to the admirable chapters in Professor Macmillan's *Cape Colour Question*.

Xavier and his fellows of the Counter-Reformation, and failed to achieve any great measure of success during the Seventeenth Century. Signs of returning life after the deadness of the " Age of Reason " only began to show themselves at the very end of the Eighteenth Century, and the year 1795 saw the foundation of the London Missionary Society, with whose efforts the next seventy years of South African history were to be intimately connected.

Two great movements influenced the missionaries who came to South Africa: the idealization of the savage state which has become identified with the name of Rousseau, and the Evangelical Revival that stirred religious England in the early years of last century. It was the age of Abolitionists, of Sunday Schools and Prison Reform, the spread of education and the Factory Acts. These were the English reply to the revolutionary movements that drenched France with blood, and though the English reformers were often fanatics indeed their national character gave their fanaticism a bent severely practical and essentially philanthropic.

Even before the days of Parliamentary Reform the philanthropists exercised considerable influence. After 1832 the balance of political power lay with that great middle class in which the Evangelical Revival was strongest, and cynical politicians found it convenient to learn its shibboleths. The enthusiasm of its new-found brotherhood took in charge the persecuted and distressed of the whole earth. Slaves were liberated in the West Indies, children rescued from coal mines and cotton factories, and Barclay's dray-men thrashed an Austrian general for atrocities in Hungary.

The premise of the inherent nobility of the savage coloured the attitude of the friends of humanity towards the troubles of South Africa. There was a tendency to see in the friction between white and black the conflict of noble unblemished nature with the representatives of corrupt, decadent and disillusioned civilization. The issue was self-evident, and it needed no chopping of logic to discover the right.

In common with its fellows the London Missionary Society was compelled to rely upon a great mass of uninstructed and sentimental enthusiasm at its base in Great Britain, but its chief misfortune

lay in the tradition made for it in South Africa by the two outstanding figures of Dr. van der Kemp and Dr. Philip. The former, a scholarly but eccentric enthusiast, reached South Africa in 1799, and though the soul of gentleness in himself was the originator of the bitter controversy. Like many who have been "converted" comparatively late in life he proved somewhat eccentric in his religion and good-hearted to the point of weakness. In an attempt to achieve real brotherhood with his flock he abandoned parts of his wearing apparel and adopted many of their customs, and his condition in 1803 rather shocked General Janssens, the Batavian Republic's newly appointed Governor of the Cape, who had known him as a youth in the Netherlands.

Van der Kemp's headquarters was a Hottentot settlement known as Bethelsdorp, which was granted to him by the Government, but grave complaints were made of the type of convert that he attracted thither. Much of his unpopularity was due without doubt to the gallant stand that he made against the attempt of the farming interest to limit the freedom of the Hottentot race, but that there was considerable justification for the charges appears from the 1812 report[1] of the Commission of Circuit for the Eastern Districts: "The founder of (Bethelsdorp), the late Mr. Van der Kemp, established such an overstrained principle of liberty as the ground work, that the natural state of barbarism appears there to supersede civilization and social order. . . . Laziness and idleness, and consequently dirt and filth, grow there in perfection . . . frequently the other Hottentots are drawn away from the service of the farmers and seduced to increase the number of the idle and lazy . . . there are many Hottentots at Bethelsdorp who have had a considerable part in plundering, robbing, setting fire to the places, and even murdering the inhabitants."

The official History of the Society denies[2] the charges and accuses the judges of the Circuit Court of anti-missionary prejudice, but it was the same Commission of Circuit that gave a testimonial to the "beneficial effects of (the) instruction" at the Moravian station at Genadendal, which it described as "a very useful institution." The Moravians certainly raised none of the

[1] Theal: *Records of Cape Colony*, Vol. IX, p. 74.
[2] *History of the London Missionary Society.*

opposition that was experienced by the London Missionary Society.

Cloete, the historian of the Trek, brings charges of illiteracy, inefficiency and grave moral offences against the Bethelsdorp missionaries. He was in a position to know his facts, and may be corroborated from other sources. There is evidence that some of the workers in the early days were of an unsatisfactory type, but it is only fair to insist that the later missionaries, wrong-headed and one-sided as they may have been, were not subject to any serious moral charge.

Cloete's *ipsissima verba* run as follows: "There were among those who assumed to themselves the important office of teachers in missionary schools within the colony, several persons so illiterate and beset by so many narrowminded prejudices as to render them totally unfit to direct the education and moral training of Hottentot youths of both sexes, while there were even some amongst them who, from the disreputable connections that they formed with females of that race, had lost all that respect which morality of conduct will always command in society."[1]

He complains that many of the so-called "schools" at which the older Hottentots congregated were simply cities of refuge from which idle vagabonds issued forth to plunder the neighbouring countryside. He accuses the missionaries, the Moravians excepted, of instilling into the minds of the natives the idea that they were downtrodden and oppressed, and maintains that they kept alive a feeling of restlessness and resentment.

If the evidence of Cloete be discounted on the score of his birth, that of Bishop Gray, an Englishman, the enthusiastic founder of the missions of the Church of the Province, is beyond dispute. In a half-jesting private letter dated from his house near Cape Town in August, 1848, just before he set out on his Primary Visitation, he writes[2]: "As you live in the neighbourhood of Lady Olivia Sparrow and Co. pray remember to inform her that I had a very friendly conversation yesterday in a call upon Dr. Philips (*sic*) the Independent *Bishop* . . . The subjects of our discussion were missions and a college. Dr. Philips who is an autocrat under the London Missionary Society did not speak very cheeringly of their missions. . . .

[1] *History of the Great Boer Trek*, p. 36. [2] *Life of Robert Gray*, Vol. I, p. 189.

"I find that in this colony missionaries are in little better odour than Bishops.[1] Many of them are mere traffickers, and books and reports are not to be believed. Moravians, Independents, and Wesleyans, all grow rich by dealing in tea and coffee, guns and gunpowder, horse and hides, blankets and ivory."

Again, from Port Elizabeth after he had ridden through the Colony from Cape Town, he wrote[2]: "The missionary institutions throughout the Colony are held—I had almost said in abomination, by the whole body of colonists: 'nests of idleness' is the usual term applied to them, and even right-minded and religious men cannot altogether uphold them. I think it quite clear that, as the Parochial Clergy increase, these institutions ought to be and will be broken up. They keep the coloured and white population too widely apart, and the capital and land of the country are deprived of the labour essential to the prosperity of the Colony. I should, however, be sorry to see them broken up for a few years. The Moravians are most in favour, and I think justly."

Dr. van der Kemp died in 1811, and with him expired the mild but whole-hearted charity of the school of Rousseau. The next great figure in the history of the London Mission in South Africa was the notorious Dr. Philip,[3] the most puzzling and one of the most interesting figures of his time at the Cape. Bitterly hated by most colonists and disliked by the official class, his character has come off rather badly at the hands of writers like Theal and Cory. Yet he found ardent supporters during his life, not only in England, and he deserves consideration if only for the vigour of his personality.

It must always be remembered that he was never strictly a missionary. Practically the whole of his active career of thirty years in South Africa was spent as minister of the Union Chapel in Cape Town, though he became Superintendent and local business Agent to the London Missions in the country in 1820. Born in poor circumstances, he found in the Congregational ministry a way of escape from life as a mill hand. His first experience of South

[1] The Bishop was experiencing a good deal of opposition from the Protestants, among whom was Philip himself. The latter wrote home to his Society complaining of "Puseyite clergy" and their doctrines.

[2] *Life of Robert Gray.* I. 195.

[3] For a glowing defence of Dr. Philip see Professor Macmillan's *Cape Colour Question,* pp. 283—6.

Africa was an official tour of inspection of the London Society's stations in the country. Cory suggests[1] that his leaving his charge in Great Britain was not unconnected with his unquestioned habit of letting his tongue run away with him when discussing the characters of other people. His tour over, he collected a congregation in Cape Town, which built a chapel for him, while the grateful Society appointed him to the oversight of its stations in South Africa. The appointment was not viewed with any particular enthusiasm by the missionaries in the field, and Moffat in particular found that his Protestant soul rebelled at the idea of anything so " popish " as a Superintendent.

From that time until his death in 1851 Philip looms impressively mysterious behind the history of South Africa, and common gossip credited him with the chief influence in shaping government policy. His credit in Britain was enormous—where there were few sources of information beside returned officials bound to reticence by the conditions of their service. In South Africa he feared no one, attacking colonists and officials with impartial vigour. None can deny his enormous capability and the tremendous driving power of his personality, but his whole career was nullified by insatiable ambition and an ungovernable temper. Moffat had criticized the " popishness " of his position as Superintendent of missions that were professedly " Independent," but there was something distinctly papal also in his itch for power and his liking and aptitude for political intrigue. At one time a cover was laid for him regularly at the Governor's table, and he took early morning rides with the Commissioners of Inquiry.[2] His report to the Society noted with pleasure the high social position[3] of missionaries in the Colony, and he spent many happy days in directing the political life and aspirations of native chiefs and Griqua captains. It was then that the ex-mill-hand felt compensation for his years of obscurity.

Serious charges have been brought against Philip's personal honesty, and there are incidents in his life that suggest that he was capable of actions by no means straightforward. But there is no need to write him down a stage villain. There are many

[1] *Rise of South Africa.* II. 404. [2] Macmillan: *The Cape Colour Question,* p. 123.

[3] " In Africa the missionary is a person of social importance, on an easy footing with officers of the army and navy, and men in the first official stations under government "—Quoted in *The Cape Colour Question,* p. 124.

who, convinced of the righteousness of their cause, press on ardently and recklessly to the end in view, using tools and sanctioning means that they would be the first to condemn in their opponents. It is the type of mind often, though not accurately, called " jesuitical."

Philip is an example of one of the dangers that beset the missionary in undeveloped country. It is easy to condemn the phenomenon known in Continental politics as " clericalism " and to turn " priestcraft " into a sort of mysterious bogey, but they are perfectly logical developments from certain given conditions, independent of the precise theological flavour of the " priest " in question. In the history of the British Isles it is John Knox and his successors in post-Reformation Scotland who are the most striking examples. The two necessary postulates are an uneducated and receptive people, and a " priesthood " intensely sure of itself and superior in general culture to those whom it is to influence. The native population in South Africa provided the former. Philip and his colleagues the latter. The result was the " domination of the priest," and the servants of the London Missionary Society found themselves a political force.

In Philip's own case much can be explained by the history of his life. Missionaries have been known to complain that the closing of all other professions to the native in South Africa has resulted in a large number of unsuitable candidates for the ministry and teaching profession. Men who feel any sort of intellectual stimulus or desire for leadership are forced to choose between the pulpit and the teacher's desk. The result is many misfits, and not a little friction with congregations. The same phenomenon was to be observed in England and Scotland a century ago. The learned professions and all responsible posts were the prerogative of a single class, and the ambitious artisan could find no outlet save the dissenting ministry. Nowadays other ways are open, but it is significant how many Labour orators of our own time began their career as local preachers. Philip, conscious of his undeniable ability, was forced back upon an American doctorate and politico-religious intrigue in South Africa.

There was another element in South African " priestcraft." The chiefs, unused to the ways of European diplomacy, unable to read or write, and feeling the need of guidance in the long negotia-

tions that were forced upon them, turned to their missionaries for technical advice. Permission to preach, with the possibility of a few conversions, was a small price to pay for the services of an expert in the peculiar learning of the white man. Once again we find ourselves back in the atmosphere of the middle ages, when illiterate kings used their bishops as ministers of state. In South Africa the results were sometimes amusing. There is the delightful situation of the fierce dispute between the French missionaries in Basutoland and the Wesleyans at Thabanchu, each championing their respective protegé in the struggle between Moroka and Moshesh.

Philip's chief failing beside his undeniable ambition was an extraordinary intemperance of language in dealing with opponents. His vehemence embittered his antagonists, and was very largely responsible for the heat of the controversy. His vigorous denunciation of officials led Her Majesty's Government to adopt a policy of which he himself disapproved, and which held up the logical development of Eastern Province policy for something like twenty years.

Though his work was restricted almost entirely to the Cape Colony, Philip's influence spread beyond its borders. His ardent advocacy established a definite school of thought in England, so that every succeeding immigrant with a mind above purely selfish relations with the natives was pledged to a particular point of view, while he was very largely responsible for the beginning of the long conflict between the two white races, rendered all the more bitter by the religious and philanthropic ideals involved.

The judgment on Philip's character has been severe, but one credit at least he can claim. He was the first South African to propound a considered logical policy, and to base it upon a principle more stable than that of "keeping the nigger in his place." Dr. Brookes has shown[1] that, whatever the errors in judgement of which he may have been guilty and whatever positive sins he may have committed, he did at least stipulate that the native should be given the opportunity to develop naturally along his own lines, and that, what was still possible in those days, white and black should be kept separate in order to make this development possible. Dr. Brookes has also shown, what

[1] *History of Native Policy*, page 17.

previous South African historians had overlooked, that so far from counselling the retrocession of the Province of Queen Adelaide, he actually told the Aborigines' Committee that he considered it inadvisable.

A further point must be borne in mind when dealing with the London Society's missionaries. Most of them were drawn from the artisan class, which in those days had little opportunity of acquiring culture. Moffat was a gardener, Ashton a printer, Edwards a carpenter, Livingstone and Philip were mill hands. The historian must put aside all trace of snobbery, social or intellectual, but it is hard to avoid the feeling that these men, though they served their Master every whit as faithfully as workers drawn from other walks of life, showed a narrowness and querulousness that might have been corrected by a liberal education. They quarrelled furiously among themselves—even the historian of the Society is compelled to admit[1] it—and they are hardly likely to have been on better terms with their Dutch neighbours.

Irritability is a danger that besets the missionary at every turn. His work compels him to spend years at a time in close company of colleagues with whom he may have very little in common. The little group at Kuruman in the first half of last century was marooned more effectively than the loneliest of lighthousemen. Petulance and asperity were inevitable, and allowance should always be made in missionary evidence for this very natural failing.

Beside the London Society two others, the Aborigines' Protection Society and the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, were closely connected with the controversial aspect of South African native policy. Founded during the first half of the Nineteenth Century by persons who included in their number some of considerable influence in the political world, they made it their business to agitate for the redress of injustice done to natives living under the British, or indeed any other, flag. The circumstances of their birth gave them considerable political influence, and their usual method of working was to bring pressure to bear upon Parliament.

The importance of both Societies lies not so much in their direct dealings with South Africa as their part in disseminating

[1] See page 129 below.

and popularizing in Britain what may be called the " missionary " point of view. They collected evidence for the various Blue Books dealing with native affairs, and being the only organized bodies with formulated views on the subject exercised great influence upon the findings of Commissions and Select Committees. Though they suffered in that they were dependent upon evidence that was often a good deal older even than second hand their power was enormous. In an age when " No Popery " was not forgotten as an election cry few Governments, however cynical, would care to risk offending the Evangelical vote in the House of Commons.

The intemperance of their style makes it difficult to assess the value of missionary evidence. They were plainly and wholeheartedly serious, with no ends to be served by misrepresentation, yet their published works display a tendency to shrill exaggeration that inevitably prejudices the detached observer. A passage such as the following, from an address presented to Lord Kimberley, Secretary of State for the Colonies in 1881, by the Anti-Slavery Society, does nothing to aid the enquiry.

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Peace negotiations were in train with the Transvaalers, of whom the Committee says : " Their career in their progress northwards is well known to your Lordship, as it has been to your predecessors in office. Your Lordship is aware that it has been marked by the massacre and spoliation of the native tribes : the slaughter of men and women alike, and the enslavement of their children : their ' commandos ' being wanting in none of those ruthless features which characterize the slave hunts of the Arabs in Central Africa."

Strident denunciation may perhaps have proved the best method of moving comfortably unimaginative members of Parliament : it certainly does nothing to simplify the task of one attempting to arrive at the plain truth of the statements.

Another instance of the reckless assertions characteristic of the missionary contributions to the controversy may be found in a memorial from the Aborigines' Protection Society to Lord Glenelg. The words that follow appear in a discussion of the Cape Colony : " Its native population—chiefly Hottentots, supposed to number at least 200,000 when the Dutch started the settlement in 1652—

had in the course of two centuries been reduced to some 32,000, mainly through European ill-usage."

The passage is clever in a lawyer-like sort of way. There was undoubtedly a considerable decline in the Hottentot population of the Colony, and it is possible that the figure of 32,000 was an accurate official estimate of the Hottentots actually living within its borders in 1830. Two hundred thousand, however, can only be the very wildest of guesses for the whole Hottentot population of South Africa, regardless of boundaries, at the time of the first settlement. The Hottentots were a nomadic people, with no knowledge of agriculture, who visited the Cape only at certain seasons. It would be equally accurate to describe the Cape as uninhabited when van Riebeek landed and to claim that the population actually increased to 30,000, since the clans arrived on their annual visit only in the following spring. The marked fall in the number of those living close to the Cape was due very largely to the appalling death rate in two epidemics of smallpox during the eighteenth century. A secondary cause is that many tribes that had formerly used the Cape Peninsula naturally moved to other pasture when they found it occupied.

Much missionary literature is vitiated by a marked partiality for the black man. Colour prejudice seems inevitable in South Africa, and those who do not despise the native often have little enough good to say for the white. In the case of the missionaries this prejudice was not so much the fault of the individual. It was rather that every worker for the London Society arrived schooled to support a policy based upon the presupposition that the South African native was struggling for dear life against selfish colonists leagued to drive him from the immemorial homes of his people.

Such a view is more tenable to-day than it was a century ago. The whites in the Eastern Province were only just holding their own against warlike tribes that pressed to meet them along the coast, while the wars of Tshaka, Dingaan and Umzilikazi were turning the interior into a wilderness. Yet in all cases of friction between the whites and their native neighbours the London missionaries regularly supported the blacks. In times of peace their partisanship showed itself in eager denunciation of the whole system of white policy. The narrow racialism of many mis-

sionaries makes it extremely difficult to determine the value of their evidence.

Even one who was the unfailing friend of the London workers passed much the same criticism. The trader Chapman, a friend of Livingstone, who in the course of his expeditions had received much hospitality at mission stations, certainly no friend of the farmers, found it necessary to say :[1] " However favourable may be the opinion I entertain of the South African Missionaries, there is one point on which I must take the liberty of offering a remark, applying at least, to some few of them : and that is the readiness with which they give ear to the report of the natives in preference of white men." Lady Anne Barnard had noticed[2] the same failing in the Moravians whom she visited in 1799, and examples of credulity are only too common in missionary literature. Though easy to understand, and probably almost inevitable, they do not help to strengthen the missionary case.

Much of the difficulty may be traced to the atmosphere of rather sickly sentiment that surrounded missionary appeals in Britain. Money was urgently required, and the public must be cajoled into subscribing it. Public opinion demanded something romantic, if not sentimental, and the missionary on furlough did his best to satisfy the demand. This artificial atmosphere reacted upon those who cultivated it and impaired their judgement when they returned to the mission field. The failing is common enough, even at the present day, but there are few examples so delightful as a little work called the *African Cry*, which appeared in 1842, and was apparently intended as a gift book for good little boys and girls :

" We have rejoiced," it announces,[3] " over the glorious results that followed the introduction of the Gospel into Southern Africa, the emancipation of the poor and degraded Hottentot from the trammels of the cruel bondage in which he had been held by the unfeeling boors, his restoration to the " rights of man," his subsequent improvements in knowledge, in industry and religion. Our hearts expand with sensations of delight when we think how he has abandoned the filthy caross for clean and comfortable clothing, the miserable hut for a neat white cottage, the scanty supply of

[1] *Travels in the Interior of South Africa*, I. 289.
[2] *South Africa a Century Ago*, p. 170.
[3] *The African Cry*, page 8.

raw roots and disgusting entrails for a well cultivated field and garden, beside a wholesome supply of milk[1] and animal food. . . . Plenty now smiles around his dwelling, while social pleasure and religious privileges shed a double lustre over all his blessings, and with extatic joy he sings :

> ' There on Mount Zion I shall stand,
> In glory, glory, glory.' "

The passage is full of unconscious humour, but the sentimentally false picture of African missions put forward by many South African workers coloured the whole policy of the English people.

Philip was not alone in his hankering after temporal power. Missionaries in the Pacific, where the London Society again was strong, gained considerable influence with the chiefs with whom they worked. This they put to uses sometimes distinctly amusing.[2] One missionary appointed himself " prime minister " to his chief, another created the post of British consul to his island and nominated himself, others drew up legal codes for their tribes (in some cases making church going compulsory) or dictated letters to the Queen of England on behalf of brother and sister monarchs in the South Seas.

The London Missionaries in South Africa did not mean to be outdone. Fired by gaudily painted accounts sent home from the Pacific, Philip and his brethren endeavoured to gain control of the political relations of the tribes that bordered on the Colony. The so-called " Treaty State System " which Philip urged upon the authorities had much to commend it as a reasoned native policy : but it had this personal interest in the background, that it would have turned the whole interior of South Africa into a missionary preserve.

The same propensity for managing the political affairs of the chiefs was noticed by Sir George Cathcart. In September, 1852, the Governor wrote[3] to Mr. Green, the British Resident at Bloemfontein, complaining that he had " received several long and elaborate treatises on political subjects professing to convey the sentiments of native chiefs, couched in phraseology which I have ascertained from my interpreter is incapable of being rendered in

[1] In his savage state the Hottentot lived almost exclusively upon milk.
[2] See Lucas : *Historical Geography of the British Colonies.* Vol. VI.
[3] Copy in L.M.S., Cape Town, 1852-3.

the language of those whose sentiments they profess to convey." These letters, he went on, were obviously the product of the missionary who was supposed merely to have transcribed them. Though he had read them with interest he could "only consider them in the light of political frauds": in future he would disregard written communications altogether.

The difficulty in drawing the line between secular counsel and religious is a commonplace, as mediæval confessors knew well enough, and there was plenty of excuse for the missionaries. On the other hand confusion must inevitably follow between their political and religious actions, and they could hardly complain, as did Livingstone, when political antagonists hindered his spiritual work.

The missionaries did not make themselves any more popular with the farmers by their great play with the English name. Both directly and indirectly they led the natives to believe that they possessed great influence with the British government, and could persuade it to intervene to support the natives against the farmers. Sechele, for instance, was told that the English would help him to avenge himself for the attack upon Kolobeng. His annoyance, when he found that he had been deceived and was considerably out of pocket through his fruitless journey to Cape Town, was vented upon the missionaries. Moffat's letters from Kuruman note a marked change in Sechele's attitude after the disappointment, and a distinct lapse from the Christian profession.

After a time the natives found that the missionaries spoke without authority, and lost a good deal of their interest in them. Missionary annoyance found outlet, not in a readjustment of their own policy, but in renewed invective against the Boers. The following passage[1] is typical: "They (*i.e.*, the natives) are thus delivered over, so far as our Government can do it, bound hand and foot to the tender mercies of their oppressors. The natives feel this keenly, they have lost all their respect for the English, in fact the respect we formerly witnessed among them toward all white men is turned to hatred, and *we missionaries partake largely*

[1] From a letter of the Rev. W. Ashton, L.M.S., Kuruman, 7th May, 1854.

in the general odium.[1] This is the worst feature in the case, they are turning against their best, and I may say, their only friends. Men that have for years shown respect to missionaries and listened to their instructions, are now bitter against us, and openly declare in their counsels (*sic*), that we are deceivers, and that the Bible is a lie."

The letter makes clear the writer's chief complaint against the Sand River Convention—the alienation of the tribes. The natives found themselves deserted by the British Government, and thereupon neglected the missionaries who had taught them to look for its help. The change of mind is not difficult to understand. Being by no means the guileless innocents of missionary appeals, the chiefs had welcomed them for strictly selfish ends, hoping to use them to sow divisions among the white men. The Sand River Convention of 1852 gave the Boers a free hand north of the Vaal, and for the time being disappointed this hope. The chiefs lost faith in their advisers and neglected their teachings, hence the complaints.

The author's claim that the natives possessed no friends beside the missionaries is a frequent statement in their literature. Whether true or false its constant repetition carried the natural corollary, that everyone else was an enemy. The continual labouring of this point when affairs were in the very delicate condition that characterized the western Transvaal in 1852 was not calculated to improve matters. The rash and irresponsible claims made by some of the London Society's missionaries were the cause of much unpleasantness with the farmers. The missionaries probably intended no harm, though sometimes it is difficult to acquit them of a touch of malice, and they certainly had no desire to bring about anything like a war. The plea of thoughtlessness, however, admits the truth of the charge, and from the point of view of the emigrants would justify the suspicion with which they were commonly regarded.

In Philip's case this had given rise to an unsavoury reputation as a provoker of native wars. Sir Harry Smith, then Colonel, put a good deal of the blame for the Kaffir War of 1834 upon his shoulders,[2] and the following extract[3] shows the opinion of him

[1] Italics represent the underlining of the original.
[2] Cory: *Rise of South Africa.* II. 424. [3] R. 91 i./41.

that was entertained by the emigrant farmers. "I have also to inform you," reported Potgieter to Pretorius in 1841, "that Dr. Philip has been with Maroes and Maroeka and I must say in my opinion an effort will be made there to turn the people against us." That Potgieter's opinion was unjustified does not affect its testimony to the reputation of the missionaries for stirring up trouble for the farmers.

Both failings of sentimentalism and love of power reappear in Livingstone. He gave a glowing character to Sechele, which certainly was not borne out by others who visited that chief, while his self-important letters to the Governor of the Cape, and his share in the negotiations between Sechele and the Boer government, display the working out of the other side of the Philip tradition.

The missionaries of the London Society should be distinguished from those of other bodies. The Church Missionary Scioety had a representative[1] with Dingaan, whose Journal goes to show that he, at least, would not have been one of those who impressed upon Lord Glenelg "the obligation of the British government to assist in protecting these border tribes of uncivilized aborigines against the predatory and hostile incursions of our own subjects" and "noted with satisfaction that friendly embassies had been exchanged between Moselikatsi, Dingaan and others and the colonial government."[2]

Bishop Gray, who was consecrated in 1847 to a see that stretched to the Zambesi and beyond, travelled in 1848 and 1849 on a Primary Visitation that covered the greater part of South Africa. He rode from the Cape to Grahamstown and back, and then by way of Bloemfontein and the Free State to Pietermaritzburg and Durban, returning through the native territories and King Williamstown to Cape Town. He noted specially that throughout this journey he was well received by the Dutch speaking people, and only once was refused hospitality. Though his correspondence notes occasional acts of cruelty done to natives by individual farmers there is a significant absence of the sweeping condemnation that characterizes the London school.

[1] Owen: for his journal see Bird: *Annals of Natal*, Vol. I. pp. 328 sqq. and the Van Riebeeck Society edition.

[2] First Annual report of the Aborigines' Protection Society.

The Wesleyans, too, were strongly represented in Africa, and embarked on a long controversy with the London Missionaries, then the dominant society in the country, with regard to the guilt of the colonists in connection with the Kaffir War of 1834. In order to fit in with Philip's policy it was necessary to prove that this had been brought about by the aggressions of the whites : on the other hand the Wesleyans were strong among the English settlers of the Frontier and defended their people. Several pamphlets were written on either side, and the Rev. Mr. Shaw, one of the settlers who came to the Cape in 1820, sums up the case for the Wesleyans in his *Story of My Mission*.[1] After a searching criticism of the government policy, which he regards as inspired by Philip, he quotes from a letter of his own written at the time : " I have already seen enough to be fully convinced of the ruinous consequences, to great numbers of the settlers and country people, by the late Kaffir irruption. I am well aware that well-informed people in England never doubted this : and it could not require corroborative testimony, if it were not that interested persons have sought to mislead the public mind on this subject."

The " interested persons " to whom Shaw refers were of course the London missionaries, threatened with the loss of influence by the breakdown of their frontier policy. Shaw refrained from mentioning them by name, but apparently his opponents were not always so restrained, and he complains of a savage attack made upon the Wesleyans and carefully organized in England with a view to discounting their criticism of the Kaffirs. A pamphlet was written in reply and " it is there shown," says Shaw, " that these missionaries, in fact, only held the same opinions as those entertained by other missionaries and clergymen of established reputation, and, indeed, by all excepting a few of the missionaries of one Society, whose principal and prominent men had been misled into an erroneous view of these affairs, which with small regard to our character or feelings they propagated most industriously in the United Kingdom."

The majority of the missionaries in South Africa faithfully carried on the work of conversion, without self-advertisement and without display. The criticisms passed above therefore do not apply to them, nor do they refer in any way to the representatives

[1] pp. 161 and 183

of the London Missionary Society in South Africa at the present day. The Philip tradition was abandoned long ago and has completely expired.[1] What has been said in criticism deals rather with a small group, now happily extinct, with a bad tradition of noisy clamour and rabid self-assertion, whose political power enabled it to exert an unfortunate influence upon the whole trend of history in South Africa.

[1] His ghost, however, is reported to have appeared at Hankey in recent years, to vindicate the title of some native families to the land occupied by them.

CHAPTER VII.

THE CONTROVERSY.

I. The Republics, the Tribes and the Missionaries.

The native policy of the Voortrekkers became the occasion of a fierce controversy. Beginning in the Cape Colony with allegations of the barbarous ill-treatment of individual Hottentots and slaves, and steady aggression upon native territories, it widened out into a remorseless vendetta between the London Missionary Society and the Boer settlements of the interior.

The first stage in the conflict is marked by what came to be known as the Black Circuit. No one would care to deny that the farmers frequently made use of the lash in punishing native servants, and that what they described under the euphemism of "fatherly correction" was in most cases severe and in many distinctly brutal. On the other hand there is no doubt that the credulity of van der Kemp and Read and the lack of moderation in the campaign they carried on in the years that followed the second British occupation damaged their own case.

Farmers complained that Bethelsdorp had become a sanctuary to which any servant detected in a misdeed had only to flee to be safe from pursuit and punishment. Van der Kemp retorted with harrowing stories of hideous and organized brutality, and of lashes and torture carried to the point of death. These tales were assiduously spread about, even in the United Kingdom, and it seems that no account was too far-fetched, no horror too revolting to gain belief from van der Kemp. At length in 1811 the authorities at Cape Town charged the newly instituted circuit court to enquire into the truth of their allegations.

For the next circuit,[1] therefore, van der Kemp and Read prepared a formidable list of crimes stretching back into the years before the British occupation, including over eighty charges of

[1] See Cloete's *History of the Great Boer Trek*, pp. 13 *sqq.*; Theal: *History of South Africa since* 1795; Cory: *Rise of South Africa* and the *History of the L.M.S.*

murder and "aggravated assault." One hundred families were implicated, over one thousand witnesses examined, and the frontier set in turmoil. The accusers were given every facility, and the landdrost who usually acted as prosecutor, having been accused of lack of zeal, stood down in favour of an official from Cape Town.

The truth of the agitation is difficult to determine. No case of wilful murder was proved, and only a few of the more serious cases of manslaughter and assault. "If the informers Messrs. Van der Kemp and Read," says the Circuit Report,[1] "had taken the trouble to have gone into a summary and impartial investigation of the different stories related to them, many of those complaints which have made such a noise, as well in as without the Colony, must have been considered by themselves as existing in imagination only, and consequently neither the Government nor the Court of Justice would have been troubled with them." Cloete, followed by Theal and Cory, points to the low percentage of convictions to show that the agitation was quite unjustified. On the other hand the official historian of the London Missionary Society uses precisely the same evidence in support of his contention that the charges were proved.[2]

The report[3] that the Prosecutor, Beelaerts van Blokland, submitted to the Secretary to Government, certainly gives the impression that he would not have been too hard on the accused, while Cory's historical honesty has led him to quote evidence which shows that the Circuit Judges gave the prisoners the advantage of every possible doubt. None the less there was much irresponsible accusation, many frivolous charges were laid, and there was nothing to justify such a picture of unrelieved gloom as the following:[4] "At the time that Bethelsdorp was founded Hottentots and Bushmen were absolutely at the mercy of the colonists. Theoretically, and according to the letter of the law, they had a few rights : practically they had none. They were enslaved, they were robbed, they were even murdered with impunity. Not only from the fact that unlike their oppressors they were savages, but also goaded to desperation by a long series

[1] *Records of Cape Colony*. Vol. IX, p. 68.
[2] On this see also Macmillan : *The Cape Colour Question* for a pro-missionary point of view.
[3] *Records of Cape Colony*, Vol. IX, p. 328.
[4] *History of the London Missionary Society*, I, 503.

of outrages, they did the most natural thing in the world—they robbed and even murdered the colonists when they could. . . . When Van der Kemp founded Bethelsdorp there was no spot of territory in all Cape Colony where Hottentots were safe from colonial oppression. That he succeeded in establishing such a refuge was in the judgment of the colonists an unpardonable offence."

The friends of the farmers were no less emphatic on their side. The following story, given as typical of the missionary charges, is familiar to all who have read any South African history. It was quoted first by Cloete and has been reproduced by all the rest. The widow of a frontier farmer of some standing was charged with wilful murder, being supposed to have done a Hottentot lad to death by forcing her other servants to hold his legs in a boiler of scalding water. She was accordingly tried, and the facts established were these : the incident had happened years before. The Hottentot was a herdboy who had been frostbitten while tending sheep. He was brought back and various remedies tried without effect. At length the woman, foolishly but with the best intentions, procured the hot water and bathed his feet herself. The boy lost the use of his legs but remained with the family and lived on as their pensioner. In the end he died from an illness which was in no way connected with the frost bite. The woman was acquitted, but she had been the victim of cruel misrepresentation, and the indignity of her trial still rankled. The " Black Circuit," now more than a century old, yet finds its place in the catalogue of grievances in South Africa.

Whatever the truth of the charges, the feeling of distrust then engendered was destined to have grave results. The British Government became a partaker in the missionary unpopularity, partly because the missionaries were reported to be all-powerful at Downing Street, and partly because of its efforts to sift the charges against the rural population.

The dispute in the Colony reached its climax with the Sixth Kaffir War. Natives and Europeans had been in contact since the close of the previous century, but successive governments that ruled in Cape Town—Company, Batavian Republic and British—had endeavoured to prevent conflict and limit the heavy expense of guarding the frontier. The missonaries introduced

an entirely new factor. Ignorant of the history of the Bantu, they imagined and represented them to be the "autochthnoes" of the soil, referring to them habitually as the "aborigines."[1] Actually, the Bantu were moving down the coast toward the south-west in much the same manner as the Europeans towards the east, displacing the Bushmen with quite as much savagery as their white rivals. The missionary view represented the eastward movement of the whites as a steady encroachment upon the ancestral homes of unfortunate natives, displaced simply to satisfy the greed and lust for expansion characteristic of the European.

The impression gained ground in Europe that the continual plundering raids of the Kaffirs were the endeavours of a great-souled race to regain its immemorial inheritance, and this view coloured the whole of official policy. The natives were represented as quiet, virtuous and peaceable. In reality the Xosa were a warlike tribe, cattle-lifters as active as the old moss-troopers of the Border, and torn by the internecine wars of Gaika and Ndlambe. Even the missionaries in Kaffirland were blind to many sides of their character. They did not foresee the coming of the great storm of 1834,[2] nor did their friends in Cape Town learn the lesson of the burnt-out farms and deserted country which marked the European side of the frontier. In all his conflicts with the white man they accorded the "noble savage" a more than papal infallibility.

The Colony was only just beginning to recover from the great raid of 1834, which had destroyed 800 farmhouses and resulted in the calling out of the whole male population to repel the invader, when there arrived the notorious despatch of 26th December, 1835, from the Secretary of State, Lord Glenelg. "Through a long series of years," ran one paragraph, "the Kaffirs had ample justification of war . . . . they had to resent, and endeavoured justly, though impotently, to avenge a series of encroachments . . . . they had a perfect right to hazard the experiment, however hopeless, of extorting by force that redress which they could not otherwise expect to obtain . . . . the claim of sovereignty over the new provinces bounded by the Keiskama and the Kei must be renounced.

[1] The Aborigines' Protection Society Committee spoke in 1837 of their "incontrovertible right" to their own soil. *The A. P. S. : Some Chapters in its History*, p. 4.
[2] See Cloete : *History of the Great Boer Trek*, p. 82.

It rests upon a conquest resulting from a war in which, so far as I am at present enabled to judge, the original justice is on the side of the conquered, not of the victorious party."

Dr. Brookes's signal contribution to South African history has been to point[1] out that the Glenelg Despatch referred, not to the later policy of the Governor Sir Benjamin D'Urban, which involved merely a suzerainty over the tribes between the Keiskama and the Kei, but to his earlier proclamation of 10th May, which aimed at their complete expulsion. It was the injustice and manifest impracticability of this policy to which Glenelg's strictures referred.

None the less the Despatch's persistent refusal to acknowledge the grievances of the white farmers in the Eastern Province and its dogmatic assertion of the justice of the Xosa cause are admirable illustrations of the point of view inculcated in England by Philip and his friends. Philip himself boasted later that he had had considerable influence upon the Secretary of State.

The exasperation of the Eastern Frontier had approached its zenith when, to crown all, Andries Stockenstrom arrived to act as Lieutenant Governor of the Eastern Districts. Though he had spent his youth on the Frontier his mission was to put into practice the policy of conciliation and treaty making that he had advocated before the Aborigines' Committee in London. He received little assistance from his subordinates, while his colleagues seem to have done their best to make his position impossible, but there is no doubt that his dogmatism and doctrinaire intolerance were the final and efficient cause that determined many eastern farmers to leave the Colony.

As soon as the Great Trek was under way the missionary campaign began afresh. The Trek itself was represented as caused solely by the abolition of slavery, and the farmers were said to be leaving the country in order to indulge their slave-dealing proclivities undisturbed. In 1881, after a lapse of over forty years, the Anti-Slavery Society addressed Lord Kimberley against the retrocession of the Transvaal, basing their opposition on this same charge, and setting out in detail the evidence in its support.

[1] *History of Native Policy.* pp. 16 - 18.

This evidence falls under two heads. In the first place the manifestoes of those setting out on trek frequently contained a passage in much the same terms as that in Retief's message to the *Grahamstown Journal:* "We complain," he wrote,[1] "of the severe losses which we have been forced to sustain by the emancipation of our slaves, and the vexatious laws which have been enacted concerning them." In the second, several of the farmers took with them on trek those who had been formerly their slaves, but whose state of slavery had been commuted to apprenticeship.

These were the charges formulated by Philip when defending his policy against those who maintained that it had been the cause of the Trek. They were repeated from time to time throughout the century and may be found in the official history of the Society. Livingstone's statement,[2] though by no means the most bitter, gains weight from the reputation of its author. "The great objection the Boers had, and will have, to English law," he wrote, "is that it makes no difference between black and white; they felt aggrieved at their supposed losses[3] in the emancipation of their Hottentot slaves and determined to erect themselves into a Republic in which they might pursue without molestation the proper treatment of blacks. It is almost needless to add that the 'proper treatment' has always contained in it the essential element of slavery, namely, compulsory, unpaid labour."

A preliminary objection must be made at once. Livingstone committed a serious blunder in speaking of "Hottentot slaves." The Hottentots were never legally slaves at any time in the history of South Africa, whose slave population was composed of various eastern races imported by the Netherlands East India Company. If they were employed at all it was as hired servants. The mistake was most probably due to the campaign carried on earlier in the century against the Cape vagrancy laws, usually described by the missionary agitators as "the slavery of the Hottentot," but though unintentional it seriously prejudges the case.

In reality the slave question was not more than a contributory cause of the Trek. Retief complained that there was no law to restrain Hottentot vagrants from wandering and plundering

[1] Quoted in Cory: *Rise of South Africa.* III. 396.
[2] *Missionary Travels in South Africa.* p. 29.
[3] The losses of some slave-holders, particularly in the Western Province, were severe.

as they pleased, that he and his friends had been subjected to ceaseless raiding from the Kaffirs, and, significant fact, " we complain also," he wrote, " of the unjustifiable odium that has been cast upon us by interested and dishonest persons under the cloak of religion." The farmers in the eastern districts of the Colony, who provided the vast majority of those who went on trek, were not slaveholders to the extent of those who lived in the Western Province, who remained behind. Some in fact owned no slaves at all. " The number of (them) is not very great in the country districts," wrote Judge Cloete in 1812,[1] and it is obvious that their liberation, however irksome, could not have been the determining cause of so great a movement as the Trek.

It used formerly to be maintained, as for example by Theal, that there was no opposition in theory to the abolition of slavery at the Cape. Theal quotes[2] in support the existence of a society at Cape Town which hoped to put an end to the institution by redeeming slave children. Professor Hattersley has shown[3] that the Society received little local support, and that in spite of a large government grant the births were gaining rapidly.

There does not seem to have been any great dissatisfaction with slavery as an institution. Probably no easy-going agricultural country where slavery is free from its more glaring abuses is anxious to get rid of it. On the other hand, slavery was not reinstated when the farmers left the country, and the share of Abolition in their migration does not seem to have been any more than the shock to vested interests caused by inadequate compensation.

The second ground for suspecting slavery as the cause of the Trek is that some of the emigrants took their apprentices with them. Slavery had been abolished only in 1834, and when the farmers left in 1836 and 1837 their apprentices accompanied them. An agitation was raised at once, and Fairbairn, the friend of Philip and editor of the *Commercial Advertiser*, used his paper to denounce " these Natal emigrants " who " had openly carried with them to the shambles of the interior the apprentices who had been redeemed by British money."[4]

[1] *Records of Cape Colony*, Vol. IX, p. 71.

[2] *History of South Africa since* 1795. II. 73.

[3] *History*, October, 1923, N.S, VIII, 31.

[4] Chase : *Natal Papers.*

A government official, Field Cornet Joubert, was sent in pursuit, and the Governor was able to inform his Council: "A principal object of this mission is the recovery of certain apprentices under the Abolition Act, who had been illegally removed from the Colony by their then employers: and I am happy to say that it has been, as far as I am yet informed, successful in that respect: there appearing to have been no great number of these apprentices with the emigrants, and no refusal to give them up." Chase, in his introduction to the documents that deal with this epsiode, says: "Field Cornet Joubert returned from his mission to the Colony on the 15th December, bringing forty apprentices with him, including women and children. He reported having left 100 of the late slaves behind him who preferred remaining with their Masters to returning to the Colony."[1] No evidence is forthcoming from the papers of the Republics to show that the apprentices who threw in their lot with their former owners continued to be treated as slaves, and a letter[2] from A. H. Potgieter to the Governor, dated at Sand River the 3rd December, 1838, announces that they had been liberated during the previous October.

Passing to the Boer settlements of the interior, the missionary attack may be grouped under four heads. Firstly, the emigrants were accused of irreligious and unchristian conduct and ideas, and in particular of opposing the spread of the Christian faith. Secondly, the missionaries maintained that they were guilty of corporate aggressions on the persons and territory of unprotected tribes, and thirdly, of acts of violence as individuals against native servants and others. Finally, it was alleged that the slave trade had been fully restored in the new Republics, and that it was either encouraged, or at least tolerated, by their governments. The first three charges have been discussed in the next two chapters. The accusation of slavery proved so persistent, and was of such importance as a pretext for the annexations of Natal and the Transvaal, that it has been treated in a separate chapter.

The first and most serious charge against the farmers is that of irreligion as a whole, and of opposing the spread of Christianity among the heathen in particular. Frequently repeated, belief

[1] Chase: *Natal Papers*, Vol. II, 43. [2] R. 20/38.

in its truth prejudiced public opinion in Britain very considerably against the emigrants. The best defence of that generation is the tradition that they left to their descendants, but a good deal of positive evidence remains. Cut off from all contact with their old life, without any sort of regular ministration, the emigrant farmers retained a considerable degree of natural piety and respect for the ordinances of religion. Edwards, representative of the London Society at Mabotsa, just over the Transvaal border, wrote[1] in 1848 that he had received several invitations from the Boers to come and preach to them. These requests came from farmers living anything between thirty and a hundred miles from his station. Seven years earlier he had suggested that the placing of a missionary among them would do more than anything else to soften the undoubted prejudice that existed against the Society. "That missionary," he wrote,[2] "would render good service to the cause."

The most striking testimony comes from Inglis,[3] who was later to come in collision with the Boer government. "We have a number of devout Boers living a day to the E.ward. When visiting a town in their neighbourhood—I called—they made me most welcome —— they washed and dressed —— assembled to about thirty people —— I held service in Dutch —— they are most attentive. Poor things —— they have no shepherd . . . whatever wrongs and disorders the Boers may have caused by their discontents and trek —— I believe that immense good will follow. I am inclined to date the emigration of the Boers as the beginning of a brilliant era in South African civilisation. Followed up as it is by British law —— From Natal to Sofala they have broken and bent the fierce Matabele —— Time will show the truth of what I say."

A certain section of the emigrants actually summoned their religious ideas to the support of their native policy. Many travellers remarked how closely the country population of South Africa retained the manners and characteristics of seventeenth century Protestantism. For such as these their occupation of the interior could be justified from the Bibles to which they looked for inspired direction in every action of the day. Were they not

[1] L.M.S., Mabotsa, 12th August, 1848.
[2] L.M.S., Kuruman, 8th December, 1841.
[3] L.M.S., Bahurutseland, 24th August, 1848.

the new Chosen People, whom a Pharaoh who knew not Joseph had cast out of the land? Imbued with the belief that they were re-enacting the story of the Exodus, with something very reminiscent of the Biblical patriarchs in their own journeys, they regarded the natives as the Canaanites, who were to be subdued before them. "Commandant Scholtz and Commandant General Pretorius stated in a crowded court at Rustenburg," so Edwards wrote,[1] "that they had the same divine authority as Joshua when commissioned to destroy all the enemies of Israel in the land of Canaan." This sentiment, though extraordinary to us, was neither a pose nor a pretext, but taken calmly as cold matter of fact. It serves to explain something of the grim severity, akin to that of Cromwell's Puritans in Ireland, which characterized the actions of even the most religious among the farmers.

The charge that the emigrants opposed the spread of the Christian faith among the natives rests upon foundations more secure than those of the former. Undoubtedly a large number who conceived themselves to have been maligned by the London Missionary Society, and who blamed Philip for the policy that had exposed them to the raids of the AmaXosa, had a profound suspicion of missionaries and missionary effort. Hence the clause in the "Nine Articles" which bound every emigrant who joined the association to disown all connection with "the missionary societies from England."[2]

It is impossible to set aside the evidence of the Rev. Mr. Hofmeyr, who worked in the northern Transvaal for twenty years. A South African by birth, a native of Cape Colony, and missionary in the Zoutpansbergen in the early days of white settlement, his book records[3] that the Boers at the time of his arrival were distinctly unfavourable to missionaries. His predecessor had been visited by two farmers armed with sjamboks who threatened physical violence, while he himself had been practically boycotted on account of his vocation. He had often been compelled to outspan in the market square of Schoemansdal, the capital village of Zoutpansberg, eating and sleeping alone in his waggon, because no one would have him in his house.

[1] Edwards to Sir George Clerk. Copy in L.M.S., Cape Town, 1854.
[2] R. 10/37.
[3] *Twintig Jaren in Zoutpansberg*, p. 26.

It may fairly be argued in defence of the emigrants as a whole that the men who lived at Schoemansdal were of a different type from those of the south. Only the more adventurous penetrated the northern mountains and lived, not by agriculture, but by hunting and the ivory trade. Hofmeyr's testimony would not apply to the greater part of the population but to the pioneer adventurers, of a type not restricted to any one place or nationality, who notoriously regard the native simply as an object for exploitation.

The best summary of Trekker policy is to be found in a letter from a certain C. Hattingh, which was received by the expedition against Dingaan and read aloud to the camp.[1] Of the policy to be pursued with regard to the Zulus Hattingh wrote[2]: "You must not allow missionaries to go to them at once. If the episcopalian(?) missionaries want to go to them you must say that you want missionaries among them but not yet. Then write at once to the two American missionaries at Grahamstown to come there, or to the Prussian missionaries in Kaffirland. You must not reject the English church outright, if you do that a religious war will break out, but you must keep them at the end of a string until you have the above-mentioned there. The missionary must be under the Christian head whom you appoint over the Zulus."

There is no need to speculate as to whether Hattingh's transparent little intrigue would have succeeded; his position is clear. Though not overwhelmingly enamoured of missions he was prepared to tolerate Americans and Germans, but he was extremely afraid of a body which he called the "English Church" and possibly, though his spelling is bad and his handwriting worse, the "episcopalians." The identification of this body is a difficulty. The episcopalian English church had no representative in the mission field as the time of the letter (1839). Bishop Gray did not arrive in South Africa until the end of 1848, and before him there were no missions among the natives and only a few official Colonial Chaplains among the whites. The Church Missionary Society had had one representative—Mr. Owen—with Dingaan, but he withdrew after the murder of Retief. Is it possible that Hattingh was confused by the title of the London Missionary

[1] See the *Dagverhaal* or Journal of the expedition in Bird: *Annals of Natal*, Vol. I.
[2] R. 3/39 of the 15th April, 1839. For the punctuation and two valuable suggestions in making out the meaning I am indebted to Mr. N. M. Pollock, B.A.

Society, and believed it to be an official organization of the Church of England ?

Whatever the body that Hattingh feared, he recommended that the leaders of the Trekkers should get into touch with either the American or Berlin Missionary Societies, which satisfied both his religious and racial scruples. As a further safeguard he recommended that missions should be made responsible to the Christian (presumably European) official, whom it was proposed to nominate to control the tribes.

The early Trekkers were on cordial terms with Archbell the Wesleyan missionary,[1] under whose influence Moroka received them hospitably, and later, according to Potgieter's own account,[3] saved them from starvation. His popularity was so great that a certain section of the company wished to have him as their official chaplain, and the dispute[2] to which this gave rise had a great deal to do with the insertion of the clause relating to missionaries in the Nine Articles.

Potgieter's letter[3] to the Governor of the Cape Colony recorded that after the defeat and flight of Umzilikazi the farmers at their own expense convoyed the missionaries who had resided at Mosega to join Mr. " Aardspiel." He enquired, somewhat sarcastically, whether this was a sign of the " bloeddorstigheid " of which they had been accused. The missionaries in question were the founders of an American mission at Mosega, Umzilikazi's headquarters, and the London missionaries tried to explain their friendship for the Boers by suggesting[4] that their judgment had been warped by repeated attacks of malaria !

Lindley, another American missionary, who had done some translation for Retief during the negotiations with Dingaan, speaks thus of him in a letter[5] of 1st December, 1837 : " The governor, Myn Heer Retief, was with us several days . . . he has, unasked, taken pains to impress Dingaan favourably towards the missionaries." Chase also records[6] that the Boers, in a letter to Sir George Napier, spoke of the " missionary Jenkins, to whom in respect of several other instances, we were under great feelings of gratitude."

[1] Mr. Shaw records that he conducted services for them : *The Story of My Mission*, p. 564.
[2] Preller : *Piet Retief*, p. 80. [3] R. 20/38. [4] Moffat : *Southern Africa*, p 587.
[5] Chase : *Natal Papers*, II., 3. [6] *Ibid.*, II, 47.

Retief personally, then, had no quarrel with the missionaries, but the problem of their relations followed the farmers to Natal. Here the members of the Volksraad, writing to the Governor of the Cape to offer him the privilege of their friendship and alliance, made their position clear. Their letter[1] contained, first a guarantee that the tribes between the Cape and Natal should be free from attack and any kind of molestation, and secondly, a clause dealing with the admission of missionaries. "That this Republic promises," it ran, "to give all encouragement to the spreading of the knowledge of the Gospel among and to the civilization of the heathen tribes that surround us or dwell under our control."

The American missionaries were always popular with the Boers, probably on account of a fellow-feeling against Englishmen. It is recorded[2] that on the 5th August, 1840, two of them, Champion and Grout, had presented the Volksraad with a copy of the "law book" of the United States, for which the members expressed their thanks. On the 15th January, 1841, Grout applied for permission to open up work in Panda's country. He was asked whether he was prepared to maintain correspondence with the Republic and to do all that he could to assist it: and upon his answering in the affirmative, the necessary permission was accorded by nine votes to four.[3]

The clearest expression of the views of the Raad is to be found in a little homily solemnly recorded among the minutes of the 2nd February, 1841. A missionary named Hewitson had appeared in the Potchefstroom district, with the news that the Rev. Mr. Owen was seeking to establish himself at Mosega. Since the districts of the interior were loosely affiliated to the Republic of Natal the landdrost appealed to Pietermaritzburg and the Raad made a lengthy reply obviously intended for transmission to the missionary. The Volksraad, it recorded, was nowhere opposed to the establishment of missionaries for the spread of the Gospel among the heathen, and it was even prepared to grant what assistance lay within its power. On the other hand the Dutch inhabitants of South Africa had suffered much in the past from the allegations of missionaries "who had behaved more like political supporters of the greater chiefs of the native

[1] R. 72/41 sections 8 and 10. [2] Volksraad Minutes.
[3] For the missionary point of view of the incident see Sir George Cory's edition of *Owen's Diary*, p. 151.

tribes than as peaceful teachers of the Word of God." Thence it was only natural that opposition to mission work should arise among South Africans, and the Raad had decided not to allow any missionaries in the interior in regard to whom it did not have reason to believe that they were prepared to accept the authority of the Republic and to confine themselves to religious work.

Objection was registered to the actual spot chosen by Hewitson and his colleague " Aven "[1] for their station. It was within the boundary of the Republic, and the Raad expressed a fear that it would lead to a concentration of native tribes in an area already given over to white settlement, upon which they had no claim. Commandant Hendrik Potgieter was prepared to point out a suitable spot in " Maroetseland " itself, beyond the border but close to white settlement. If the missionaries would move thither the Republic was prepared to take the whole tribe under its protection and guarantee it against attack.

The passage is valuable as a record of conflicting emotions. The farmers obviously had no particular love for missionaries, but they were prepared to make the best of the job, so long as they had a guarantee that their own authority would be respected. Mission stations were disliked for another reason. If at all successful they must inevitably complicate the refugee problem by leading to the growth of a large native settlement. This the little group of farmers could hardly be expected to approve.

Mission stations in the Transvaal came up once more before the Natal Raad. On the 25th April, 1842, it discussed a rumour that Dr. Philip had arrived among the frontier tribes. The news was regarded as ominous, and was referred to the local legislature or " Adjunckt Raad " of Potchefstroom for action. No further trace can be found.

The records have not revealed any evidence for believing that the inhabitants of Natal deliberately excluded missionary enterprise. Perhaps workers were only admitted grudgingly, and rather with an eye to placating the British authorities, but none the less the only point on which the Boers actually insisted was the recognition of their own authority. They were probably influenced by the rumours, widely believed in the camps, though

[1] Owen.

now discredited, of the part played by Owen and Captain Gardiner in the massacre of Retief.

In what may be called the Transvaal things were somewhat different. Not only did the Boers themselves admit Potgieter's slaveholding before 1841,[1] but the territory included a large body of public opinion opposed to missionary activities. On the north and north-eastern frontiers there were no mission stations, but all along the western border was a chain of missions that had been founded by the London Society. These soon found themselves embroiled with the Boers.

The missionaries were convinced of the hostility with which they were regarded. "The Boers," wrote Livingstone,[2] "hate missionaries," and went on to tell the story of "an emigrant who lives near (Mokhatla)—a most inveterate enemy to missionaries . . . and one who showed displeasure twice with Mokhatla by demanding why he had not killed 'that missionary' according to previous instructions." Impediments were thrown in the way of opening up work and finally two missionaries were expelled from the country.

The missionary correspondence piles up an alarming array of charges, but the Boers had their grievances too. They objected not so much to the spread of Christian doctrine as to the political outlook with which it seemed to be associated by some mission workers. They accused them of inciting the natives to resist in arms, and of unsettling them in their allegiance. The farmers noticed that the tribes that possessed missionaries were the best supplied with arms and ammunition. The natives also noticed this phenomenon, and, putting their own interpretation upon it, pleaded hard to be allowed to have a missionary too. If, when he arrived, he proved unwilling to act as gunsmith and general artillerist to the tribe, they were disappointed and not a little annoyed.[3] It was this unsettling influence that the Boers tried to express when they accused the missionaries of "interfering in politics." Livingstone scoffed at the charge as applied to himself, but his writings leave little doubt that he played a large part in the doings of the frontier.

[1] See page 208 below. [2] L.M.S., Kuruman, 17th March, 1847.
[3] See Edward's letter quoted in Appendix I.

At bottom the policy of the Transvaal Republic was that of Hattingh. There were undoubtedly individuals who opposed all missionary work in any shape or form, but the real attitude of the government, and hence of the majority, is easily shown by quotation, even from the missionary side. Edwards wrote from Mabotsa in 1849[1]: "Last week I had an interview with the chief Commandant H. Potgieter. He, I believe, is a good man, he required nothing from me but that I 'prevent evil' and give timely notice of any warlike preparations against the Boers, or of wars among the natives, which the emigrants are resolved to put down. He charged his people to the south of us to be careful not to molest us or to annoy the missionaries . . . I was out two months since itinerating among the native towns in the Booer (*sic*) region, and met with no hindrance."

This evidence is of considerable interest as it refers almost certainly to Commandant General A. H. Potgieter, who generally appears in an unfavourable light. The breach with the Volksraad party had just come to a head and he may have been agreeable to Edwards for political reasons. There is even the possibility that "his people to the south of us" whom he charged "not to molest or annoy the missionaries" were Pretorius' followers in the districts of Potchefstroom and Rustenburg. Potgieter may have been trying to get a little of his own back.

Even Livingstone bears out the same point of view, and again in connection with some commandant near Mokhatla's. "Though the commandants," he wrote,[2] "have always expressed themselves in a most friendly way towards our objects, they made me aware of a strong undercurrent of opposition . . . When the Commandant in Mokhatla's vicinity learned that it was no longer mere itineraries we contemplated he suddenly altered his tone, and threatened in a most furious manner to send a commando against the tribe with which we meant to settle . . . that my object was to take possession of the country for the English government . . . that I wished to introduce firearms among the tribes, as I had done among the Bakwains, etc., etc. . . . he offered to present no impediment if I should "promise to teach the natives that the Boers are a superior race."

[1] L.M.S., Mabotsa, 15th January, 1849. [2] L.M.S., Kolobeng, 26th May, 1849.

The Commandant's answer sums up precisely what the better type of man among the emigrants thought upon the point. In theory at any rate they were not opposed to missions, but they hated the London Society's workers as emissaries of the Cape administration, sent out to win over the tribes, and as forerunners of British rule.[1] The view was not altogether without justification. Behind them lay the record of Philip's policy of treaties with Moshesh, Faku and Adam Kok, in the future the missionary preserves of Bechuanaland and Basutoland were both to fall to the British Crown.

Livingstone's manner did not reassure them. He persisted in referring to the farmers as rebels and jeered at a commission from the Dutch Reformed Church of the Colony for " baptizing the babies of rebels wholesale." Again " the period of my visit," he wrote,[2] " was immediately after they had suffered a defeat by by the English. But living North of them I was unaware of the circumstances. I had no wish to come in contact with them but unintentionally became acquainted with Pretorius, on whose head the governor had placed £2000 or £3000. Several others have had large sums issued for their capture. So my appearance may have seemed to their uninformed minds as that of a Government spy."

The second offence of which the missionaries were suspected was participation in the trade in arms and ammunition. The share of the London Society's representatives and of Livingstone in particular has been discussed in an Appendix, but the suspicion was actually encouraged by them. " The Boers believe," wrote Livingstone, " that I have sold Sechele 500 guns and a cannon. This belief has tended to keep them from slaughtering the Bakwains as they have done to several other tribes. Knowing this although applied to for information I have declined speaking on the subject."

This passage alone would serve to absolve the Transvaal Boers of all responsibility for the fate of Livingstone's house and goods at Kolobeng. Even though the accusation had been absolutely unfounded Livingstone himself admitted that he intended to give the farmers cause to believe it. All the laws of commonsense,

[1] It was part of the Treaty State System that the local missionary should act as Government Agent.

[2] L.M.S. Kolobeng, 26th May, 1849.

therefore, would justify them in taking steps to remove a grave public danger. If, as has been shown in the Appendix, the charge was justified, the position of the Boers becomes clearer still. His silence may have been due as much to consciousness of guilt as to a desire to protect the Bakwena.

Livingstone's Commandant told him that he would tolerate the missionaries provided they taught the natives that the Boers were a superior race. This remark, crudely as it was expressed, illustrates a deep-seated apprehension on the part of the farmers. The tribes were becoming more restless and intractable, and the little group of whites was threatened by the rising flood of native self-consciousness. The missionaries worked among the independent tribes beyond the border, and their influence was suspect. The men who attacked them so bitterly in the European press, so the farmers argued, were not likely to hold their tongues before an African congregation, and they were anxious to minimize the danger.

The fear was not without justification. Livingstone and his friends undoubtedly showed a readiness to listen to native stories, and accepted them without much examination. They consistently upheld the side of the chiefs in their disputes with the Boer government, which they regarded as invariably the aggressor. Their moral support, together with a free use of the English name and promises of English assistance, stiffened the opposition. A chief engaged in a quarrel with the farmers unhesitatingly turned to the missionary for counsel and support, and his appeal for help to Cape Colony was invariably drafted by the missionary.

Even here the mission workers should not be too hastily condemned. In many cases the frontier farmers appeared as land-grabbers of none too scrupulous a character. The missionary blunder lay in ignoring the Republican government and their refusal to discriminate among the emigrants between the innocent and the guilty. Instead of appealing to the Boer authorities for the punishment of wrongdoers they tried to stiffen the opposition of the natives and bombarded the Colonial administration with appeals. This alienated the whole body of farmers and widened the breach between Boer and missionary.

One last point of importance arises from Livingstone's dealings with the Commandant. The Boer authorities raised no objection

to the missionaries' working and itinerating among the tribes within the border, but they flatly refused to allow them to establish a station. This is in accordance with the decision of the Natal Raad in the case of the " Maroetsieland " mission. The farmers paid the missionaries the compliment of believing that a mission headquarters would lead to a great concourse of natives. This was opposed to the fundamental principle of their native policy and might end in the edging out of the white settlers. The Commandant therefore let Livingstone know that it could not possibly be allowed.

The missionaries do not appear often in the Republican records, but the United Volksraad at its first meeting was called upon to deal with a letter from the mission station at Marico—either from Livingstone or Inglis, probably—which asked permission to supply the natives with firearms. The request was refused, but it had done nothing to improve the reputation of the writer.[1] Though he was probably only the stalking horse of Sechele or some other native chief, to the farmers he must have appeared as the ally of barbarism against civilization.

Section 6 of the same minutes is a little difficult to understand : " On the motion of Field Cornet J. Viljoen dealing with the mission station at Klein Marico : the answer of the Raad is that the field cornet must take care that the buildings are not destroyed, and the farm shall be retained for public purposes." Apparently the mission station had been abandoned, but there is no indication whether the workers had merely moved to another spot or whether they had been ejected by the government.

The Volksraad Minutes reveal two other occasions on which the mission station was mentioned. On the 22nd January, 1850, the " mission farm " was sold to a man of the name of Egelbreg. On the same day the boundary commission already in existence was authorized " to delimit provisionally also the ' place ' or Mission Station to the further approval of the Raad." In all probability this merely refers to the settling of the boundary of the purchaser's ground, though it is just possible that it may point to the occupation of another farm by the missionaries.

The station does not appear to be one of the London Missionary Society, which was more likely to be expanding than

[1] Volksraad Minutes, 23rd May, 1849. See page 85 above.

retreating in 1849. The simplest explanation is that the records refer to one of the earlier stations founded when Umzilikazi ruled in Marico a dozen years before. It may have been Owen's, abandoned soon after its establishment in 1840,[1] or possibly that of the American missionaries who were escorted south by Potgieter.[2] In either case the withdrawal was voluntary and the station had been abandoned for some years.

One case does exist of the deliberate expulsion of two missionaries by the Boer government. In the year 1852 Edwards and Inglis of the London Society were arrested by the authorities at Rustenburg and sentenced to banishment on a charge of " high treason." The incident aroused considerable interest at the time, when it was regarded as typical of the attitude of the farmers, but an examination even of the victim's own case will show that they gave a certain amount of provocation. It is hard to take the matter seriously, and the formal " trial " at which sentence was passed contains a good many elements of burlesque.

The correspondence between the Governor at the Cape, the Secretary of State and the Missionary Society was reprinted in a Blue Book.[3] Inglis' statement was printed first in the *Bloemfontein Gazette* for 20th January, 1853, and thence filtered through both the Slave Trade Commissioner at Cape Town and the Governor, each of whom added a covering letter, so that by the time it reached the Blue Book the correspondence had become impressive. Inglis admitted that his account was given from memory and might be inaccurate in details, but he claimed that its summary of the happenings was essentially true to fact.

It seems that Edwards and he were summoned to stand trial on a vague charge that arose out of a letter written by them to Commandant Scholtz of Marico. The letter complained of the conduct of a commando, probably that of 1852 against Sechele, for which the Commandant had been responsible. The real ground for the prosecution, if not the actual charge, was probably the carrying on of an agitation against the government of the Republic similar to that waged by Livingstone himself. Edwards, further, was tried for " high treason " in respect of a letter which

[1] See *Owen's Diary*, pp. 153 sqq.
[2] L.M.S., Kuruman, 8th December, 1841.
[3] P.P. England, 1852-3, LXVI, pp. 800 *sqq.* The correspondence of the missionaries with their Society reveals no fresh information. Inglis merely forwarded the newspaper cutting that gave his account of the affair.

had appeared in the *Commercial Advertiser* of Cape Town containing an attack upon the Transvaal government. Inglis was tried first, but turned the tables by denouncing the Republic for sanctioning slavery. Under cross-examination he was compelled to admit that he had never heard of the custom of "in-booking" or apprenticeship. He then went on with a long story that he declared he had heard from a Kaffir. The Landdrost, who acted as judge, interrupted him and demanded, "Do you believe a Kaffir?" and when Inglis replied in the affirmative went on to say that "eleven Kaffirs, taken prisoners, declared that the missionary had told them that if they would receive God's Word, he, the missionary, would give them all guns." Inglis was called upon to explain.

The missionary then showed signs of losing his temper, and he confesses, "I raised my voice to full talking pitch and said emphatically, 'I hate slavery.' Mr. Pretorius was offended at my voice and tartly said, 'Don't speak so hard.'"

The proceedings became farcical. Inglis in his rôle of prisoner at the Bar went on talking. After a remark more than usually effective "P. Scholtz got up"—apparently from the body of the court—"not in his usual cold manner" and quoted the Book of Joshua. Pretorius also jumped up and accepted full personal responsibility for certain orders given. The trial resolved itself into a noisy pandemonium with Inglis, apparently, "raising (his) voice to full talking pitch and speaking emphatically" in the middle.

After order had been restored the court considered its judgment for half-an-hour and finally pronounced sentence of deportation.

The incident is hardly a sober illustration of native policy. Pretorius, here the villain of the piece, is usually regarded as one of the exponents of a milder way in native affairs, and the difficulty was one of personalities rather than policy. The Court was not interested in the treatment of missionaries so much as in getting even with two annoying people who had been telling tales outside the Republic. This they proceeded to do regardless of their calling.

Certainly the Republic does not come well out of the affair. Its officials betrayed distinct signs of political inexperience and

a touchiness as to personal dignity that was simply childish. In the end they contrived to make themselves more foolish than ever. The Boers undoubtedly put themselves in the wrong, but they were not guilty of more than an error of judgement.

The missionaries on their side do not seem to have been perfectly straightforward. "Mr. Edwards, as the public will see," wrote Inglis, "has been tried for 'high treason,' on account of his report to the Directors, published in the *South African Commercial Advertiser*, May 21st, 1852. This paper, I am sorry to say, was given by me to one Murphy, a trader, who came to our house at the time the commando had gone out. A blunder on my part. I did not intend to have given it him. He gave it to the Boers, and such are the results. I mentioned the paper to Murphy, he said that the Boers had it also from other papers." The missionaries were fond of making rash statements in literature intended for publication in Britain, perhaps to liven up a dull report or to awaken the sympathy of subscribers. Instead of challenging the authorities of the Republic, Edwards actually tried to keep his charges from them. For all that, Inglis showed the paper to casual visitors, and he could hardly complain when the farmers called him to account.

That the expulsion of Edwards and Inglis finds no place in the charges brought against the Boers in the official history of the London Missionary Society may seem strange, especially as much was made of the affair at the time, but the explanation is to be found by reading between the lines in the passages following[1]: "Between 1846 and 1850 friction resulted from the action of Edwards and Inglis. Livingstone found it impossible to work with the former at Mabotsa, and both Edwards and Inglis criticized Moffat's Becwana version of the New Testament. Both were artisan missionaries of the type so common in the first fifty years of the Society's history . . . Inglis and Edwards, after an unsatisfactory history, soon ceased to have official connection with the work." Again, in connection with the dispute with Livingstone, who is now the Society's hero, "Edwards," says the History,[2] "seems to have been apt at taking offence, and prone to magnify trifles."

[1] *History of the London Missionary Society*, p. 593.
[2] *History of the London Missionary Society*, p. 610.

The Society's own experience of these men was unfortunate, though the official historian, bound to uphold Livingstone against any breath of criticism, may have been unduly severe. In any case the isolated life of the mission worker is a prolific breeder of petty squabbles, and it is most likely that both Edwards and Inglis gave the farmers considerable provocation. Not particularly favourably disposed to mission workers in the first instance, the latter proceeded to extremes, and the vulgar altercation of the trial was probably due to faults on both sides. The Society soon dropped any thought of fighting their case and allowed the whole affair to sink into oblivion.

Edwards and Inglis were not the only members of the Society who showed a distaste for substantiating random accusations. Theal tells[1] the story of an invitation to Livingstone to come to say his say before the authorities of the Republic and in the presence of a deputation from the Dutch Reformed Church of the Colony. He arrived at the place arranged, but before the time appointed for the deputation engaged in a quarrel with some of those present. He lost his temper, abused them in round terms as rebels, called for his horse and rode off in a huff without waiting for the meeting.

The incident finds no record in his published works, but in a private letter[2] written to headquarters Livingstone categorically denied the charge of having run away. He made the usual farewells before leaving, he said, and all those who were standing about saw him go. This may be true, but he left before the meeting of the Volksraad that he had undertaken to attend, and without substantiating his charges.

The records show at least one request from a missionary body for permission to work in the Republic. On the 9th August, 1853, a "Provisional Sitting" of the Volksraad considered a request from the "Kerkelijke Collegie" that the Moravian Brethren should be allowed to establish stations in the Transvaal, but decided to postpone the subject for discussion by the full Raad. On the 13th September, the appeal came up before it, but consideration was again deferred to a later date. No later discussion has been found.[3]

[1] *History of South Africa since* 1795. III. 393. [2] L.M.S., Kolobeng, 26th May, 1849.
[3] Volksraad Minutes.

Here again the issue is not clear. Those who regard the farmers as uncompromising enemies of missions will claim that they were caught in a dilemma, since they professed to look upon the work of the Moravians with approval, and so shelved an awkward matter. The contrary side may argue that there may have been other reasons. Certainly nothing seems to have come of the request, though Pretorius the Commandant General was reputed not to object to missions under suitable direction.

An incident which tells in favour of the farmers comes in the "Life" of Robert Moffat written by his son.[1] The missionary "found himself face to face with a grave question at Sechele's. Three missionaries had arrived—a Mr. Schroeder, with two companions, belonging to the Hanoverian Mission under the direction of Pastor Harms of Hermannsburg. Curiously enough they had come through the Boers, and in some measure by their aid, in answer to an appeal from Sechele,[2] who had begun to despair of further attention from the London Missionaries. At this time Pretorius was in power at Potchefstroom. He was a man of mild disposition and sought to pursue a more peaceful policy towards the native tribes. The Boers were harassed by dissensions among themselves, and a certain party of them was cultivating the friendship of the border chiefs, particularly of Sechele . . . So the Hanoverians remained and are doing good work within the Transvaal, where they have many stations. Their nationality and their concessions to the Boers on some points give them a footing where English missionaries would be shut out."

The passage again illustrates the points at issue between missionaries and farmers. The issues were partly racial. The Boers wished to exclude all Englishmen, traders as well as missionaries.[3] They were also political : the authorities at Potchefstroom suspected the influence of the Kuruman mission upon the border chiefs. The policy of the state was still that of Hattingh : to prevent the English from entering the country, and for that, if for no other, reason to encourage missionaries of any other nationality.

[1] Page 307.

[2] The chief with whom Livingstone had worked before he began exploration.

[3] Compare Chapman's experiences at Potchefstroom, see page xi. above.

The Instructions to Field Cornets of 1858 contained certain duties in connection with missions.[1] Native chiefs living within the territories of the Republic might not receive a missionary without the permission of the Field Cornet, who was to submit all such requests to the Executive Council. Although the regulation shows an undeniable suspicion of missionary work it was not unreasonable as a measure of police, especially in days when any gin-seller or gun-runner might easily have masqueraded as a missionary.

The second charge commonly brought against the farmers is that they showed a complete disregard for the rights of native tribes, and in particular dispossessed them of their land. It may have arisen in part out of a misconception of the position in the interior. People at the Cape do not seem to have realized the appalling havoc of the Lifaqane, and the country north of the Orange was believed to be still inhabited by a dense indigenous population. The entrance of the whites into this field would necessarily have entailed considerable suffering for the natives they dispossessed. Glenelg's informants clearly held this view, but the population of the interior had melted away during the wars of Tshaka and Dingaan.

The Boers, as Livingstone admits,[2] were actually welcomed as rescuers when they ejected Umzilikazi, and the authorities of the Transvaal often received requests from wandering tribes for permission to settle in their land. Some have been noticed in a previous chapter, but even as late as 1852 two chiefs named "Motlaliloe" and "Lenchue," who had been put to flight by the restless Mahura, applied for permission to stay at Lotlakana, within the boundary of the Republic.[3] Their request was supported by a letter which professed to come from Montsiwa, but which was certainly written and probably composed by his missionary. Such incidents are evidence that the Boers were not always regarded as fierce and bloodthirsty villains.

They did not always embark upon punitive expeditions quite so lightheartedly as some would suggest. Even in the case of the murder of a farmer a commando was not the first expedient, and an attempt might be made to secure redress by negotiation.

[1] Eybers: *Select Constitutional Documents*, p. 414.
[2] *Missionary Travels and Researches*. p. 30.
[3] R. 373/52, 2nd February, 1852.

On the 3rd January, 1852, a letter[1] of remonstrance was addressed to a chief Moshoeh, described as "upper chief of the Marostos," by some farmers from Leeuw Spruit. They complained of the murder of a farmer named Hendrik Swanepoel and three of his children by a petty chief named Posoelie, and also of the driving of the cattle from three neighbouring farms. Moshoeh was called upon to enquire into the actions of his subordinate and warned that on his answer would depend the question of peace or war.

It is significant that the farmers of Leeuw Spruit were anxious to gain their end by negotiation if possible, instead of resorting to force. The tribal system, too, was taken for granted. The guilty captain was not punished out of hand but reported to his overlord. How far this diffidence was due to physical weakness on the part of the complainants is, of course, another matter. Further light is thrown upon the incident by a letter[2] carrying thirty-nine names, headed by that of Corneliza Fransina Swanepoel (probably the widow of the murdered man and mother of the children), which was despatched next day to Commandant General A. W. J. Pretorius by the womenfolk of the district. The Commandant General was begged to come to their assistance "as father and Friend" to avenge the "blood and murders and orphans."

The affair may perhaps be reconstructed in this way. Swanepoel and his children were murdered, but the farmers of the district were afraid to take action against Posoelie for fear of involving his overlord. They therefore despatched the cautious letter of the 3rd January. The women, who often at this time seem to have been more determined than the men,[3] found out about it and determined upon stronger measures. The next day, therefore, they sent off the letter invoking the assistance of the Commandant General.

It must always be remembered that, far from desiring strife, the object of the earliest emigrants had been to escape from their AmaXosa neighbours. Moroka, so Potgieter told[4] the Governor of the Cape, had pressed him to stay in the neighbourhood of

[1] R. 360/52. [2] R. 361/52.
[3] Witness the experience of Cloete, Her Majesty's Special Commissioner at Pietermaritzburg in 1843, who was mobbed by an angry crowd of women after he had persuaded their menfolk to surrender the Republic.
[4] R. 20/38.

Thabanchu. The Barolong chief was probably anxious to obtain the aid of the farmers against Umzilikazi and Moshesh, and offered them as much land as they wanted, but the Boers feared possible complications, and moved north in search of unoccupied land. They found it north of the Vaal River, but were at once in conflict with Umzilikazi. Even this land, which they had conquered before colonizing, was carefully purchased, so Potgieter said, from a chief named Makwana, who claimed to have been its ruler before the Lifaqane.

Their final right, however, depended upon the defeat and expulsion of Umzilikazi, and it must be confessed that this title proved extraordinarily elastic. Chapman complains[1] that the Boers used it to justify a claim of jurisdiction over tribes that had never owed the least allegiance to the Matabele. There is no doubt that the Republic, once established in its own territories, began to encroach upon its neighbours. On the other hand there was some justice in Commandant Scholtz's appeal[2] to Sechele to accept Boer suzerainty, reminding him "how that he had always been compelled to submit by the power of Moselekatze until we had driven him off: how that he himself had been poor and weak before, like all the other tribes, but now, rescued and enriched by the farmers, he had risen against his benefactors, protecting robbers and sheltering stolen animals."

The truth is that most of the tribes had been too weak to resist the whites when they first arrived, even if they had wished. For a time they were prepared to accept their overlordship and pay them tribute. Gradually the ivory trade enriched them, the peace imposed upon the country by the Boers gave them time to recuperate and there was no longer any need to exist miserably on the edge of the desert or to wander restlessly from place to place. Traders supplied them with ammunition, strained relations between the Boers and missionaries made them realize that the whites themselves were not united, and they began to meditate casting off a yoke that they had accepted only as the alternative to slavery and subjugation.

As a whole the leaders of the emigrants showed almost a scrupulosity in their care for the title deeds of the land they

[1] *Travels in Southern Africa*, I. 15.

[2] From the Commandant's Report, Vol. ad T. 2/25.

occupied. Deeds of sale were carefully drawn up, signed and witnessed, and preserved so carefully that many have survived the hurly burly of the times down to the present day. The earlier farmers showed a desire to secure their land by peaceful means and to avoid conflict with the native. Deeds of violence undoubtedly occurred, no pioneer movement has been without them, but the official policy of subjugation was of later growth, and would have been out of the question in the early days of the Trek.

That extremely clear-sighted Governor, Sir George Cathcart, who seems to have been rather overlooked by South African historians, summed up the whole matter in a few words. Writing[1] from Grahamstown on the 14th November, 1852, after hearing a good deal of missionary polemic, he told the Secretary of State : " With regard to Mr. Porter's[2] opinion as to the doctrine of interference in native quarrels, or even between remote settlers and their neighbours, founded upon motives of humanity, experience has convinced me that in most cases the evil is aggravated ultimately by interference ; for that although the white settler has a tendency to encroach, and it appears to be a law of nature that he should prevail, his individual interest is more to live in peace with his neighbour than to quarrel with him, his encroachments are gradual, for he covets and grasps no more than he wants, and possibly, though I fear but rarely, his object is accomplished by fair means."

The only qualification necessary is that in the Free State and Transvaal at least large tracts of country were without inhabitant when the whites came in, and their early expansion at any rate involved only waste lands. Missionary letters usually speak either of a wholesale " enslavement " of the natives or of their expulsion from their homes. Neither happened in the early days of the Trek. There was room for both races in the land, and only later with the increase in the white population did friction begin. In the 40's and 50's native clans were still applying for permission to settle on waste lands within the border, and the great tribes were yet unsubdued.

But even though the farmers may have been careful to safeguard their position by obtaining grants of land in due form there

[1] P. P. England, 1852-3, LXVI, p. 753.

[2] Sometime Attorney General of Cape Colony.

is still room for enquiry. Did these grants possess any meaning or validity? Does native law give the chiefs any power to alienate the land of the tribe, or, again, were the grants wrung from them by violence or fraud? A transaction of this sort might be drawn up in a form to satisfy the strictest European standards and yet inflict substantial injustice upon those ignorant of the nice distinctions and legal implications that the jurist loves. The whole conception of land ownership was alien to the economic sentiments of the natives, who were still in the communal stage. There were no landowners among them and the chief by himself certainly had no right to alienate what was the property of the whole tribe. The economic results of the alienation of land do not occur to natives who have never experienced anything of the kind. They are in the same position as those Hottentots near the Cape settlement who sold all their cattle for knives and looking-glasses, and were obliged to steal them back again at night to avoid starvation.

Complications arise from the fact that the Bantu had not yet completely abandoned the nomadic stage. Though depending largely upon agriculture they were not fixed to any particular spot and moved on after a few years if the exhaustion of the soil or pasture, or the attentions of their enemies, made a move seem desirable. A native kraal, again, like a mediæval manor, claimed much more than the communal fields: a wide area was necessary for pasture and hunting, and the tribes were separated by stretches of country over which more than one tribe exercised a vague claim. What would be the meaning of a "sale" of a portion of this "waste"? Probably it implied little more than that the chief had no objection to the establishment of the Boers as neighbours.

Another question is the status of the respective contracting parties. The Boers regarded these transactions as treaties between equal sovereigns, but there is no guarantee that the native chief had the same idea. Granted that Dingaan was serious in his sale of the country south of the Tugela, did he intend to abandon all claim and all superiority over that vast tract of land? Since the Zulus "sold" the territory on three separate occasions they probably regarded their side of the transaction as a mere grant of permission to settle and not as a cession of sovereign rights.

Force and fraud may not have been absent. Was any sort of pressure brought to bear upon the signatories? Did they understand the literal meaning, to say nothing of the economic implications, of the documents to which they set their marks? These questions can only be answered by an examination of each case in turn.

The transaction with Panda was a simple bargain. The Boers wanted the Natal territory, Panda the Zulu throne. The doubt is whether Panda intended to concede any overlordship over himself. The white man's documents are perfectly clear, Panda's quoted words are vague. Delegorgue was probably right when he suggests that the transaction was deliberately left obscure so as to allow of development at a later date.

At bottom the occupation of the western Transvaal was a mere matter of conquest, but in the east there were two important land transactions, the negotiations with Sekwati and the purchase from Mswazi. Though the latter gives the impression of a fictitious sale designed to give a semblance of legality, the native chief can hardly have suffered. He received his hundred head of cattle for territory that was not his to sell. The dealings of Potgieter with Sekwati are a different matter. He seems to have persuaded the chief to make a grant of the land along the mountains without laying too much stress upon details. Sekwati complied without much thought since he did not occupy the land himself, but when he saw the number of farmers who intended to settle on his borders, and hunting expeditions penetrated even his own country, signs of alarm began to show themselves.

On the whole, however, there does not seem to have been much trouble. The chiefs were usually quite ready to treat, and it was only later, when they began to realize the implications of their hasty promises, that friction began to develop.

Naturally there were occasions, even in the early days, when the farmers resorted to physical force. Three attacks in particular were singled out by their enemies for condemnation: the attack upon Umzilikazi in 1837, that on a chief named Ncapay in Natal, and the expedition against Sechele in 1852 in the Transvaal. Each of these collisions was an important affair, not a plundering raid by irresponsible marauders, while the charges are laid by persons of standing, Cloete in the case of Ncapay, Livingstone in

that of Sechele, and they must receive full investigation. They may be taken as typical of each of the three stages of the history of the Trek—its early days, the Republic of Natal, and the Transvaal, and provide an opportunity of examining the policy and actions of the three phases.

The campaign against Umzilikazi was an incident of the Trek, and has been discussed in the historical chapter. There is little need to do more than illustrate the charge to which it gave rise. "In the case of Moselikatsi," so the Aborigines' Society said,[1] "it is important to keep in view that . . . the emigrants . . . had most unjustifiably placed themselves in the position of enemies, making an inroad on his territories, since they not only entered his country without permission, but by a route which he had utterly prohibited, under the known determination to consider all as invaders and enemies who entered his country by that route." The Report then describes a "battle" in which the emigrants are reported to have been "defeated," and continues: "This created on the part of the emigrants a thirst for revenge. A cry for war was raised: blood was demanded. The friends of the conquered party flew to arms, attacked the principal camp of the chieftain, and nearly destroyed the whole, leaving a fearful demonstration of their total disregard of all native rights, and their resolution, as civilised men, not to yield the palm for ferocity and revenge to uncivilized tribes and pagan warriors."

There is something rather magnificent in the way the story has been adapted to suit the Philipine point of view. The reader is tempted to speculate upon the Aborigines' Society's opinion of the regulations of the Volksraad of Ohrigstad which "utterly prohibited" unattached natives from crossing the boundary, "under the known determination" (duly notified to the surrounding chiefs, which Umzilikazi forgot to do) "to consider all as invaders and enemies who entered (the) country by that route." It would have been interesting to hear the views of the Society upon these restrictions, especially as the Boer Republic failed to follow the excellent lead that Umzilikazi had given them, and only shot a native if he ran away, being foolishly content as a general rule with taking him alive.

[1] First Report of the Aborigines' Protection Society. See the History of the A.P.S., p. 11.

Umzilikazi was a brigand chief who had laid waste a great part of the Transvaal for his own ends, but it was not, and never had been, "his territory." A large body of farmers and their families was massacred some days journey from his kraal. The punitive expedition, though successful, was too weak to accomplish more than a rapid raid and equally rapid retreat. The Aborigines' Society must be given credit for believing quite honestly that its horrid tale of wanton violence was true, but it cannot blame those who had lost friends and relations if they did not regard these charges with the equanimity that is possible at the present day.

Their chief authority, so they said, was one whom they described as "that eminent friend of humanity and distinguished ornament of science, Sir John Herschell."[1] Sir John was engaged in preparing a chart of the Southern Heavens at Cape Town, a thousand miles away. He, poor man, can have had no direct knowledge of the events, and it is obvious that he relied on the cabal of Cape Town "philanthropists" who had constituted themselves the chief authorities upon the native question. The ingenious marshalling of facts and subtle use of half truths more damaging than deliberate fabrication are characteristic of their methods of controversy.

The opinion of the missionaries on the spot, even of the London Society, did not tally with that of the "eminent friend of humanity and distinguished ornament of science." Edwards wrote[2] from Kuruman in 1841: "Their wish (*i.e.*, of the Boers) is, I believe, to live on terms with the inhabitants, so as to secure their services, and get a footing in their country. This chief [Umzilikazi] who delights in blood and rapine dares not approach the Boers, knowing that 100 of them mounted would put his whole force to flight . . . hence the very Boers may become a sort of safeguard to missions which may be established at Mosega and the neighbourhood." Edwards clearly had heard nothing of "reckless and ferocious savagery," and there the matter may be left.

The attack upon Ncapay is important as the final cause of the British re-occupation of Port Natal. He was head of a tribe living to the south of the territory claimed by the farmers, a

[1] *History of the A.P.S.*, p. 10. [2] L.M.S., Kuruman, 8th December, 1841.

district where much cattle-lifting had been going on. Cloete, usually the friend of the emigrants, is the chief witness against them, and for that reason carries great weight.[1] His story is that Pretorius had led a fruitless commando to the south to put a stop to this thieving. On the return journey he turned without warning upon an innocent chief named Ncapay, attacked his kraals at daybreak, killed several men and carried off seventeen children, 3,000 head of cattle and 250 sheep. He says also that a strong protest made by some of the farmers actually serving on the commando was smothered by members of the " Pretorius clan " and the whole affair hushed up.

This is practically the same version as that given by the Wesleyan missionaries Garner, Shaw and Archbell, and accepted by Governor Sir George Napier. The missionaries deserve consideration, since the Wesleyans were not committed to any particular view of the emigrants, and Archbell in particular had been very friendly with them. They were also in a fair position to know what had actually happened, since one of them was stationed with the Pondo chief Faku, the neighbour, and perhaps naturally the enemy, of Ncapay.

An official report[2] was laid before the Volksraad and approved by it on the 14th January, 1841, but it throws little light on the dispute. The Republic was defended publicly by two of its officials, Lombard and Zietsman, whose letters found a place in the columns of the *Grahamstown Journal* and the *Zuid Afrikaan* of Cape Town. Charl Celliers, almost the official historian of the Trek, attempts a defence of the action of Pretorius.[3] The raid is justified on the ground that Ncapay had stolen cattle while the farmers had been engaged in the war with Dingaan. His guilt, Celliers says, was pointed out to them by the neighbouring chief Faku. After the fight two of Ncapay's women were captured, who, after some reluctance, testified to the truth of the charges against the tribe. The expedition also claimed to have identified as stolen a few of the cattle found in the kraal.

Zietsman in a letter to the *Zuid Afrikaan* dated 5th January, 1841, Commandant Lombard in the same on the 10th February, and the Volksraad in its letter to Sir George Napier dated the

[1] *History of the Great Boer Trek*, p. 137. [2] R. 24a/39, and the Volksraad Minutes.
[3] Bird : *Annals*, I, 249.

7th April stress the same points.[1] They claim that the Boers did not take the field at all willingly, but only after long deliberation, under much provocation, and with authentic confirmation of Ncapay's guilt from Faku, who was at war with him and hinted that his own friendship for the Boers was one of the causes of Ncapay's enmity. They claim also that the commando carried off only three thousand head of cattle out of seven times that number in the chief's kraals, "just sufficient to pay the costs of the expedition," that stolen cattle had been in Ncapay's possession, and finally, that his own people had testified against him.

The evidence is really very weak. Faku, the strongest link in all these accounts, was playing a double game. The armed force that Pretorius led into his neighbourhood was a distinct danger and he neatly deflected it against a neighbour with whom he was already at war. Though representing himself to the Commandant General as the friend of the emigrants he was probably quite as guilty as his rival, and if no stolen cattle had been found in the kraal of Ncapay, could probably have supplied the necessary " evidence " himself. At the same time that he was negotiating with the commando Faku sent off post haste to his official " ally " the Governor of the Cape, informing him of the savage and unprovoked attack made upon his neighbour, and, lest his known friendship for the British should lead to his being himself the next victim, requesting the gift of arms and ammunition. It was the Governor's feeling that military protection would be safer than the supply of firearms that led to the reoccupation of Port Natal by a British garrison.

The evidence of the prisoners is little better. Celliers says that they were two women who only " confessed " after considerable moral pressure had been brought to bear. Their story is not to be trusted. The testimony of natives, and so much more of native prisoners of war, obtained in such circumstances, is not to be taken at face value. The women would probably tell the story that they saw their questioners wanted to hear.

All the evidence against Ncapay is reduced to the stolen cattle found in the kraal and Faku's supposed capture of stolen cattle from the chief a few days before. Though here again the evidence

[1] Reprinted in Bird : *Annals*, Vol. I. pp. 622 and 631.

has been vitiated by its connection with Faku it is probably true (the Archives contain the affidavit[2] of a farmer who stated that he himself had traced stolen cattle to the kraal); but the most that it establishes is that Ncapay, in common with many chiefs of the district, had probably had dealings in stolen cattle. Official action was called for, but there was no excuse for the sudden attack that singled him out from among his neighbours for drastic punishment.

The element of surprise is the most serious part of the charge against the commando. The chief was given no opportunity to defend himself against the accusation, or even, if he were found guilty, of showing his penitence. Nowhere did the official apologists deny the suddenness of the attack. The kraal was assaulted one sunrise, innocent and guilty were confounded in the *mêlée*, and not all the special pleading of Celliers or Zietsman or Lombard can change the fact. The " fine " of three thousand head of cattle carried off to " pay expenses " bore no sort of relation to the handful of animals actually identified, and at times the affair looks uncommonly like an ordinary thieving raid. In answer to the farmers' plea that the penalty was only a small part of the immense herd left in the kraal a cynic might well say that it was as many as the commando could comfortably manage.

Ncapay, however, had a bad reputation among the whites, and on general grounds something might have been said for a punitive expedition. Chase describes[3] him as " a chief who, it is said, before 1828 had no political existence whatever, and only rose into ' bad eminence ' by his warlike and predatory habits. His known disposition had assembled round him refugees from the Fetcanie and other tribes—kindred spirits of evil—and he became formidable to all around him." Though Chase might be suspected of trying to make out a case for the Boers, the Blue Books are free from the risk of that suggestion. Lieutenant Governor West[4] of Natal wrote in April, 1846, of " seven kraals of the warlike tribe of N'Capay," while Mr. (later Sir Theophilus) Shepstone in the same year spoke of some of his followers as " men who have been born and brought up in a tribe at once the most warlike and

[1] See the Governor's letter to the Volksraad, and Celliers's own statement in Bird: *Annals*, I. pp. 249 and 630.
[2] R. 75/41. [3] *Natal Papers* II, 159. [4] P. P. England, 1847-78, XLII, p. 341.

bloodthirsty in South Eastern Africa (the Zoolah nation itself not excepted)."

The assault on the tribe, therefore, was not entirely without provocation, nor was Ncapay an innocent and harmless victim. The Boer leaders believed that he was guilty of theft and deserved punishment, but however conclusively the crime had been proved no one could justify a surprise attack as the most fitting form for that punishment to assume. In this the case of Ncapay differs from that of Umzilikazi, who had tried to massacre the whole body of the Trekkers, and of Sechele, who in the long drawn out negotiations received ample warning of the attack. Even Cloete recognized that the unsavoury affair reflected no credit on Pretorius.

The third clash between Boer and native to provoke the criticism of the outside world was the attack upon Sechele, chief of the Bakwena living just beyond the border district of Marico, with whom Livingstone was working. There is a good deal of evidence from each side, Livingstone and Chapman giving Sechele's version, and the records giving that of the commando. A personal element is introduced by the sacking of Livingstone's house. The missionary was absent from Kolobeng at the time, but Sechele gave his story in a letter to Kuruman. According to this[1] the Boers demanded that he should make his submission to them and close the great desert road to the north that ran through his territory. Upon his refusing both demands the Boers attacked and burned his town, killing over sixty of his people and carrying off many prisoners. Livingstone maintains that his own enquiries corroborated the chief's version and that the Boers commonly expressed the opinion that " Sechele was getting too saucy."

Though true as far as it goes, this account must be supplemented by that of Chapman[2]: " From Sechele we learned that the war originated with Maseleelie . . . who had often been promised by the Boers that if he supplied them with a number of servants he would be exempted from other demands." In other words Moselelie was a regular subject of the Republic who paid the tribute known as the " Labour Tax." After several demands Moselelie refused to comply any further and, " being an arrant coward, fled to Sechele for protection . . . on the Boers demanding

[1] *Missionary Travels and Researches*, p. 113. [2] *Travels in Southern Africa*. I. 114.

that Maseleelie should be given up, Sechele refused, saying he could not do it unless he were to cut open his own bowels and let them drop out."[1]

The two accounts taken together give the causes of the quarrel. Sechele was trying to do what Moshesh had accomplished at Thaba Bosigo—to provide a rallying centre for the smaller tribes and build up a great Kaffir power.[2] That he had been very considerably successful appears from the Commandant's report that five lesser chiefs were with him the day of the attack on Kolobeng. Moselelie, chief of the Bakhatla, a recognized dependant of the Boers, fled to him for protection, and his refusal to surrender the fugitive was tantamount to a declaration of war. The whole history of the South African Republic was haunted by the fear of being cut off from further expansion northward by an outflanking advance of British adventurers along the Hunters' Road beyond their western boundary. In the end the fear was justified, but quite early in its history the Republic took steps to anticipate the danger. This is the meaning of the ultimatum to Sechele. Finally, the chief had been collecting firearms for some years—McCabe had dealings with him as early as 1846[3]—and the Boers called him " the worst powder-smuggler in the country." His store of arms could be directed only against the Republic, and action was required.

There is other evidence of Sechele's desire to build up his power. In 1846 he attacked Khaki, a minor Bakwena chieftain, by night, and Edwards wrote[4]: " the treacherous murderous course that chief practised to subdue if not annihilate a rival is very much deprecated. He has no apologist among the natives or any who paliate (*sic*) cruelties not surpassed by the ruthless Matabele." Livingstone bore record to the same attempt to establish a hegemony over his neighbours. Writing in May, 1849, he says[5]: " Another tribe called the Bakaa, having suffered considerably by repeated attacks of the Bamangwato, lately

[1] This elegant remark is certainly genuine. It appears in the Dutch report as well as in Chapman, and was repeated to Professor Norton with graphic accuracy when he visited Bechuanaland in 1920. I am indebted to him for the explanation that Sechele referred to the other chief as a child in the womb of its mother, which could only be removed by violence. This emphasizes his protective attitude towards the lesser tribes.

[2] Compare also what Ncapay had done, p. 142.

[3] Volksraad Minutes, Ohrigstad.

[4] L. M. S., Mabotsa, 26th May, 1846.

[5] L.M.S., Kolobeng, 26th May, 1849.

came a distance of about 150 miles in order to join the Bakwains : they had no sense of security in their own country, and were attracted thither by the report that Sechele had embraced " the Word of Peace." They had come as they said in order to ' enjoy sleep,' : they had none at home." Livingstone naturally liked to feel that the migration was due to the fame of his own influence over Sechele, but it is more probable that the Bakaa had heard that the chief was setting himself up, like Moshesh, as a protector of the weaker tribes.

Sechele persisted in his policy, even after his brush with the Boers, and Livingstone's praise[1] of him illustrates the guiding interest of his life : " He has great intelligence, reads well and is a fluent speaker. Great numbers of the tribes, formerly living under the Boers, have taken refuge under his sway, and he is now greater in power than he was before the attack on Kolobeng."

The farmers had meditated bringing Sechele to order before 1852. Livingstone wrote[2] in 1847 : " While still engaged in the erection of our dwelling at Chonwane, we received notes from the commandant and Council of the emigrants, requesting an explanation of our intentions, etc., as also an intimation that they had resolved to come to deprive Sechele of his firearms . . . the Commandant lived near to this tribe and being a well-informed man we found no difficulty in persuading him that an attempt to disarm Sechele would break up our mission, and that he ought to delay the execution of the orders of Council until I should lay the whole matter before it. This I did by letter[3] and likewise stated my intention of introducing the Gospel among the eastern tribes by means of native agents." A little later he says : " On returning to the Commandant's we found that the representations I had made to the Council had met with a favourable reception."

The first mention of trouble on the frontier to appear in the Boer records is the appointment of a delegation on the 22nd January, 1850, to settle a boundary dispute in Marico which had arisen between whites and natives.[4] On the 20th May Field Cornet Enslin of Marico reported that" Segela " was plainly preparing for war, and urged that steps should be taken to counter

[1] *Missionary Travels and Researches*, p. 123. See also Mackenzie's *Ten Years North of the Orange.*
[2] L.M.S., Kolobeng, 17th March, 1847.
[3] Unfortunately all the Potchefstroom papers have disappeared.
[4] Volksraad Minutes.

him. Nothing seems to have been done until the 4th October, 1851, when a man named van Staden complained to the Raad that a newspaper at "the mission"—the London Mission at Kuruman—was spreading disaffection among the natives. The Volksraad resolved that spies should be sent to observe Sechele, and that preparations should be begun for a commando.

The whole of the Transvaal was unsettled and for some time it was doubtful whether the attack should be launched against Sechele, or other centres of unrest in the Lydenburg district and at Schoonspruijt. The western frontier was considered the more pressing problem and the commando set out, some five hundred strong, under Commandant Scholtz, on the 20th August, 1852. It was as big a fighting force as the Republic could conveniently muster, but the commandant General Pretorius, though he accepted full responsibility for all that was done in his absence, was kept behind by an attack of gout.

Sechele was in high spirits and had made all preparations for war. He had collected the chiefs of five neighbouring tribes and broken open Livingstone's house to get at his muskets and ammunition. The Commandant's report[1] shows that he declined more than one offer of terms, and on the 30th rejected the message (quoted above)[2] which reminded him that his power had been founded on the destruction of the Matabele authority by the farmers. Secure in the possession of his firearms Sechele cheerfully accepted the arbitrament of war. Professing to attribute the Commandant's offers to a shortage of powder he offered to lend him some from his own supply, and ended his taunt with the remark, quoted both by the missionaries and the Boer report, that "they were in the pot, and that next morning he would put the lid on."

The long delay and numerous parleys before beginning hostilities are remarkable, contrasting forcibly with the usual raiding tactics of the Boers, and arouse the suspicion that they were not at all anxious to try conclusions with the most powerful chief of the frontier. The day following their arrival was a Sunday, spent by the farmers in resting and prayer meetings. Both sides made use of the one water supply without collision, and some of the farmers, so Sechele told Moffat, actually attended a prayer

[1] The Commandant's Report is in Vol. T.1/25, p. 248 *sqq*. [2] Page 134.

meeting held in the village by a native teacher. One of the day's happenings is worth remembering if only for the quaint light that it throws upon the whole affair. The Commandant's own words run thus : " Segela zend entusschen een paar kaffers na den lager om zuiker te vragen ook mij aantezegge dat ik op maandag twee mannen na hom mote stuure ik andwoord hun dat Rissies beter voor vegmann zijn als zuiker."[1]

After the failure of the negotiations on Monday the farmers attacked. In spite of their firearms the Bakwena were driven from their defences and fled in all directions, taking refuge in the bush and the neighbouring hills. The huts of the village were set on fire and large numbers of prisoners, chiefly women and children, were taken. Several patrols were sent out : one discovered the hiding place of Sechele's property and brought back 3,000 head of cattle and a large number of smaller animals, eleven horses, forty-eight muskets, two waggons and a quantity of miscellaneous articles, all of which were afterwards sold " to cover the expenses of the expedition." Among them was a set of gunsmith's tools which had been removed from the workshop at Livingstone's station near Sechele's old town.

This is the bare story of the skirmish between the Boers and the Bakwena, but the missionaries maintained that it was an unprovoked aggression upon an enlightened and peaceable chief, and characterized by barbarity and inhumanity towards the non-combatant women and children. The preliminaries of the attack were summarized above, but the chief cause was undoubtedly the farmers' concern for their western frontier. Sechele did not mention the affair of Moselelie to Moffat, as he wished the missionaries to believe that he had given no provocation, but it was undoubtedly the *casus belli*. If to these two causes be added Sechele's accumulation of munitions of war, there appears to have been reason, if not justification, for the ultimatum. The Boers certainly chose their own time for taking action, but so did Bartle Frere against Ketshwayo in 1879, and they might fairly claim that since war was inevitable it would have been foolish to allow to the aggressor the choice of time and terrain. It is a point in favour of the Boers that, having defeated and disarmed Sechele, they were

[1] " Sechele sent a couple of Kaffirs to the camp to ask for sugar, and to tell me that I should send two men to him on Monday. I answered that chillies were more suited to a fighting man than sugar." T.1/25 p. 248.

content with the demonstration of their power and did not even subjugate the Bakwena to their government or levy tribute. Though the actions of the emigrants might be difficult to justify by the strictest moral standards, they show no worse than many whose success has resulted in condonation by European diplomacy.

Sechele did not make so good an impression upon all his visitors as he did upon Livingstone and Chapman. Baldwin the hunter, who passed through his territory in 1857, noticed that he was " fine, intelligent looking . . . and well dressed, but having too good an opinion of himself," while his people the Bakwena were " an independent lot of Kaffirs and have no end of guns."[1] Over twenty years after the commando burned Kolobeng, Sechele was visited by Dr. Emil Holub, who found him in 1873 " considerably over fifty years of age, stout, very tall, and with such a perpetual smile playing over his face as to give me the impression that I was in the presence of a hypocrite."[2]

The actual fighting does not seem to have been characterized by any undue brutality. In fact the whole campaign was waged in a very sporting spirit : both parties used the same water supply before the engagement, the farmers attended a service held by one of Livingstone's native teachers, and the rival commanders sent one another bantering messages. The incident of the seizure and treatment of the women and children is discussed in Chapter IX.

The most striking testimony on the farmers' side is the attitude of the Cape authorities. Relying on the known anxiety of Her Majesty's Government to prevent any injustice to natives, and strongly advised thereto by Livingstone, Sechele appealed to Governor Sir George Cathcart. His letter was on the lines of that which he had sent to Moffat, mentioning only the " unjust and unprovoked attack," suppressing the episode of Moselelie, and throwing no new light upon the case. The Governor, however, made enquiries from other sources and returned a non-committal reply. He pointed out to Sechele first, the difficulty of interfering in a district so far away from the Colony (his own experience in Basutoland can hardly have been encouraging) and

[1] *African Hunting*, pp. 114 and 175.

[2] Quoted in Mendelssohn's Bibliography, I, 731.

secondly, that the Sand River Convention precluded any interference with the affairs of the northern Republic.

His considered judgment is contained in a despatch[1] to the Secretary of State dated the 11th February, 1853: "I enclose copy of a message addressed to me by the chief Sichely, of a tribe lately engaged in hostilities with the Transvaal Boers, whose territory is situated somewhere towards the Salt Lake, and beyond Her Majesty's dominions.

"I also enclose my answer.

"It is also rumoured that this chief is about to proceed to England. If so it is probably at the advice of some traders through his country, with which class of adventurers he has been on good terms, and whose undue and indiscreet dealing in arms and gunpowder may not improbably have got him into his recent troubles."

On Livingstone's advice Sechele did not let the matter rest at a written refusal. He actually journeyed to Cape Town to present his case in person, but again failed to impress the Governor. The missionaries, remembering perhaps the palmy days of Philip and Glenelg, and not altogether sorry for an opportunity to work up an agitation in England, advised Sechele to go there in person to press his case upon the Queen. Funds, however, gave out, and financial pressure forced him to return home.[2]

This closed the episode, but a personal element had been introduced by the sacking of Livingstone's house at the time when the commando was in the neighbourhood. The missionary believed that after "denunciations against myself for having, as it was alleged, taught them (the Bakwains) to kill Boers"[3] the farmers broke into his house, plundered it of furniture and valuables and destroyed a large stock of medicines and books. Chapman saw the house not long after the raid: "Kolobeng," he wrote,[4] "is the site of the town where Dr. Livingstone lived with the tribe. His house had been pillaged and presented a melancholy picture of wanton destruction. The Boers had taken away everything that was valuable to them in the shape of furniture,

[1] P.P. England, 1852-3, XLVI, pp. 791-2.
[2] While at Cape Town he was financed by the Agent of the London Missionary Society who advanced him a considerable sum on the credit of the Society.
[3] *Missionary Travels and Researches*, p. 118.
[4] *Travels in the Interior of Africa*, I. 115.

utensils, implements and destroyed some hundreds of Sechuana Testaments and other religious books and tracts, the leaves of which still lay scattered for nearly a mile in every direction. Even the door frames had been taken out and the floor was strewn with bottles of valuable medicines, the use of which the Boers did not understand. The town where Sechele was attacked, and which was burned to the ground, a few miles from Kolobeng, presented a melancholy scene of destruction, bestrewn with the unburied carcases and bleaching bones of the natives who fell."

In both accounts the reponsibility of the Boers is assumed on the hearsay evidence of Sechele, who was not particularly well disposed to them after what had happened, but the mission also figures in their own records. On 27th August the diary of the commando records that a message was received from Sechele, making a special request that the mission station should not be touched. This was agreed to and an announcement to that effect promulgated in the camp. Two men suspected of contravening the regulation were brought before the Krijgsraad or Council of War, found guilty, and given the choice between a penalty of thirty lashes and forfeiture of their privileges as burghers on commando. These " privileges " probably meant a share in the captured cattle, and perhaps of children, and were the equivalent of payment for the services of the members of the commando. In the present instance they would probably have included six head of oxen and a share in the proceeds of the sale the rest of the plunder. As a punishment, however, their forfeiture seems a peculiarly light alternative to thirty lashes, and both culprits chose the financial rather than the corporal penalty.

The report gives no evidence as to which mission station had been plundered, and it may not have been Livingstone's at Kolobeng. The commando did not reach Sechele's village until the 29th, and there is no record of a patrol at Livingstone's until at least the day after the skirmish. The case may perhaps refer to the looting of another station on the way to Kolobeng, and in any case was the work of irresponsible marauders.

The day after the defeat of Sechele a patrol visited Livingstone's station, and the report maintains that it had already been broken into by the chief in his search for firearms. The shed which served as the missionary's workshop had been overlooked by

Sechele—the reason is not stated—and acting upon information received from native prisoners and some European traders the farmers broke into it and removed some half-finished muskets and what they described as a set of gunsmith's tools. Since they regarded Livingstone as an ally of Sechele and no better than a common gun-runner, they decided after some deliberation not to waste time by barring up the house, but to leave it open as they found it.

The Report of the Commando is insistent, even suspiciously insistent, that the missionary's house had been broken into before the patrol arrived, and that Sechele was the culprit, though why he should have searched the dwelling-house for firearms and neglected the workshop in which the natives knew that some muskets were stored is not indicated. It is emphatic, however, that only arms and tools were removed by the commando. The only piece of his property that Livingstone actually heard of as being sold at the official auction of the plunder was a vice, and this would agree with the Report. Confiscation of his stock in trade was part of the regular punishment of a gun-runner.

Someone, however, plundered and wrecked the house, and the question is: who did it? Theal suggests very plausibly, though without any evidence in support, that the scattering of Bibles and drugs may have been the work of natives who believed that Livingstone had bewitched their chief. They hoped to dissipate his influence by destroying his spells and "medicine." The incident hardly seems in keeping with the character of the Boers. Though ignorant of the use of drugs they had a superstitious reverence for them which is common in the backveld at the present day, and were more likely to have carried them off than to have indulged in wanton destruction. Five years before, Livingstone himself had written[1]: "Medicines are eagerly received, and I intend to procure a supply of Dutch tracts for distribution amongst them." At the same time the destruction of Livingstone's stock of Bibles, even though written in Sechuana, is hardly consistent with their reverence for the Scriptures.

Sechele may only have abstracted firearms and the commando removed no more than the muskets and their tools, but they were followed by others who wantonly destroyed anything

[1] L.M.S., March 17th, 1847, Kolobeng.

for which they had no use. The removal of door and window frames certainly seems to point to the work of Europeans, though they might have proved useful to members of the gang of Griqua marauders who, Theal says, were in the neighbourhood.[1] But the records show that one mission station had already been plundered, and there is no reason to believe that all the members of the commando were plaster saints, or that their morality was higher than that of Europeans in the same position. Looting is an invariable accompaniment of warfare, and any squeamishness among members of the commando had probably been removed by the discoveries made in the workshop. A proved gun-runner was fair game.

This was the opinion of Sir George Cathcart, when, like a good physician, Livingstone followed the remedy he had prescribed to Sechele and sent him a full account of all his wrongs: "I have subsequently received," he wrote[2] from Grahamstown on the 14th November, 1852, "a long communication on the subject of this collision between the Transvaal emigrants and natives from a Dr. Livingstone, who, it appears, is a missionary residing in the country of the chief Sicheli, in which he complains of certain losses and inconveniences he has sustained, which do not amount to more than the ordinary losses incidental to a state of war, or to which those who live in remote regions of South Africa beyond Her Majesty's dominions must be frequently liable."

There were three separate stages in the attack on the mission. First, Sechele broke open Livingstone's house and removed fire-arms and ammunition. Next, the farmers, acting upon information received from prisoners and traders, broke into the workshop and carried off some tools found there. Among the European informants the Report mentions "the Englishman Edwards." Was by any chance the missionary[3] of that name trying to get his own back on Livingstone by telling tales? Finally, some persons unknown, who may have been Boer or Griqua marauders, or natives jealous of Livingstone's influence, plundered the house and scattered what they did not need.

The truth of Livingstone's complicity in the powder trade has been discussed in the Appendix, but it is not really relevant

[1] *History of South Africa since* 1795, III. 399.
[2] P. P. England, 1852-3, LXVI. p. 7532.
[3] There was also a trader, Edwards, who was partner with Chapman.

to the question. On his own confession the missionary did his best to make the Boers believe that he had supplied Sechele with "500 muskets and a cannon."[1] His reasons for this rather extraordinary statement do not matter here, the point is that the farmers believed that they had his own acknowledgement, besides the evidence of common report, that he had armed the Bakwena against the Republic. They were therefore justified by all the rules of common sense in taking action against a notorious danger to the State.

[1] See page 124 above.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CONTROVERSY, PART II.

The Farmer and the Native.

The policy of the farming communities was not alone in provoking criticism: the relations of farmers with natives as individuals came in for their share. The accusations fell under three heads. First, there was that of aggression, in that the pressure of individual farmers gradually deprived the natives of their territory and drove them from the best springs and most fertile land: secondly, the Boers were accused of raiding native herds and carrying off their cattle; and, thirdly, it was said that they were commonly guilty of gross cruelty to the natives with whom they came in contact and to their servants in particular.

The scope of the charges is best illustrated by specific examples. The Rev. J. J. Freeman, Home Secretary of the London Missionary Society, visited South Africa in 1849. In a book[1] that told the story of his tour he wrote: "It is, perhaps, questionable whether the reports respecting the ravages said to have been committed by the Boers have not been exaggerated: yet it cannot be doubted that they have committed very serious aggressions on the aborigines, have inflicted harsh and arbitrary punishments, and have taken not only immense quantities of cattle, but also large numbers of children, to be used as slaves in fact, although not so called. It is *confidently* reported that they have sold them to one another at about one pound per head, and, in default of cash, an equivalent has been given, a horse, a cow, or a few sheep." Freeman is unusually restrained for a missionary writer, but his testimony is perfectly clear. Strangely enough, he recorded his conviction that a report he had seen in the *Commercial Advertiser* of Cape Town, describing the massacre of a whole tribe in a cave,

[1] *A Tour in South Africa*, p. 274.

must have been exaggerated.[1] Of the substantial truth of his own statement, however, he felt no doubt.

Chapman, too, has a good deal to say of what happened in the course of the continual friction between the farmers and the natives. The Boers were accustomed to organize commandos and "the cattle were swept off, villages burnt, the inhabitants murdered, and what was perhaps the worst feature of the case, the women and children, and often the men, were dragged away to become forced labourers—in fact, slaves—on the Dutchmen's farms."[2] He affirms that cattle were often taken on frivolous pretexts. "I have known a single Boer to turn out twenty head of fine large cattle from the herd of a petty chief, and make them his own, under pretence of the cattle having trespassed on his lands: the Boer, himself, being at that time not even armed with any authority from the landdrost or field cornet . . . The younger Boers in general, are not averse to war with the tribes, the horrors of which are disregarded in anticipation of the plunder they expect to secure, as well as their share of the native children taken."

The quotations show clearly the scope of the enquiry that must be undertaken, but it might be useful to examine the opportunities that the writers had of attaining the truth. The Rev. Mr. Freeman was a visitor to South Africa pure and simple, and his book is the record of a comparatively short stay. He passed from one station of the London Missionary Society to another, and his information was drawn almost entirely from the workers of the Society. He represents, therefore, one line of evidence only, even though it be clear that he did his best to be fair and was sincerely anxious to arrive at the truth. It is one of the minor ironies of history that the one scandal too revolting for him to believe, the extermination of Makapan and his tribe, was literally true.

Confirmation of his attempts to get at the truth comes, strangely enough, from the Boer records. While staying with Inglis at his station with the Bahurutse in April, 1850, he sent for three of the farmers of the neighbouring district of Marico, one of them being the local field cornet, and proceeded to put them several questions dealing with the relations of the Republic

[1] It was, in fact, perfectly true, see page 248 below. [2] *Travels in Southern Africa.* I. 15

with the missionaries. Either they were provoked by his manner, or a guilty conscience made them feel uncomfortable, for according to their own account they were not particularly communicative, and Freeman passed from his catechizing to something of a homily. The three subsequently made a full report[1] of the affair to headquarters, stating that they had taken up the attitude that they were not members of the government and hence could give no information on matters of policy. On their own showing they had little to say, and Freeman does not even mention the interview. Though it may have produced no result, Freeman is acquitted of speaking of matters of which he knew nothing.

Chapman was a genuine South African pioneer who had spent years in the interior and claimed to be an eyewitness of all that he told. On the other hand the Transvaal government had done its best to hinder his trading ventures, and though his witness must be listened to with respect a natural resentment may have inclined him to see the worst side of things.

However much the evidence of these writers and of those who, like them, criticized the policy of the Boers, be discounted as exaggerated, biassed or unsupported, there is a certain residuum which cannot be shaken. It tends to show that among the farmers were individuals who had no respect for human life or native rights. The small tribes along the edge of the desert which never recovered from the tyranny of the Matabele invited attack, and raiders who carefully avoided the well organized tribes made individual natives and small kraals their prey.

So much must be taken as proved by the friends of the missionary cause: only mere unreasoning prejudice would refuse to admit it. But this does not necessarily mean that the marauders formed any large proportion of the people of the Transvaal or that their deeds were countenanced by the government. Every community has its black sheep. What has to be determined is the proportion of the brigand type to the law-abiding, and the degree of success attained by the governing body in enforcing order.

The friend of the farmer must concede from the very beginning that he was not likely to be concerned excessively with the fate of the natives. Where his interests were not affected he might

[1] R. 208/50.

treat the Kaffir with a rough good-humour, verging upon respect in the presence of one of the greater chiefs, but when his own wishes were concerned the farmer-aristocrat of the Transvaal was likely to be as arbitrary as the many-quartered lord of an ancient European house. Some there were who plundered without conscience, and relied upon their fellows to protect them from the consequences, but it would be a mistake to attribute this state of mind to the white population as a whole. Chapman tells with some relish the story[1] of a commando at a kaffir kraal, whose panic-stricken members were only too pleased to escape with their lives as a result of his intercession with the chief.

Of the specific charges, one arose from the infiltration of farmers into land already occupied by native kraals. These they proceeded to eject from the best parts of the land and to reduce their inhabitants, if possible, to a status resembling that of the mediæval serf. It was not an experience of the early days of the Trek, when the farmers preferred vacant land and an absence of complication, but as early as the 22nd April, 1853, Commandant General A. W. J. Pretorius issued a Proclamation[2] that attempted to check the abuse. Complaints had been received, he said, to the effect that a gradual encroachment upon Kaffir tribes had been going on along the western frontier of the Republic. Along this frontier the border line had not yet been marked out, there was a large number of small unattached tribes of the sort that Sechele was trying to weld together, and the area of white settlement ran into the native lands.[3] The proclamation prohibited any further grant of farms in the district until the boundary had been regularly determined. The old principle of separation was attempted by a second clause to the effect that no farmer might live beyond the limits of the Republic. Any who chose to disobey this regulation were to be regarded as beyond the protection of the law and to be held responsible personally if the state came to any harm through their lawless deeds.

The intentions of the Proclamation were undoubtedly excellent, but it was probably no more than a pious expression of opinion. The commandants could not control their people, and a farmer determined upon pushing westwards was not likely to be deterred

[1] *Travels in the Interior.* I. 107. [2] R. 519/53.
[3] The border was uncertain until the days of the British Annexation in 1877.

by the empty threat of the last paragraph. The increasing dryness of the country towards the desert was probably more of a check upon expansion than any number of Commandant General's announcements, though the latter did at least show that the officials were anxious to do their best.

The charge of raiding the herds of natives and carrying off cattle is the best authenticated of all, yet its precise significance is not easy to decide. Cattle stealing is inevitable in pastoral country, and its existence both in Natal and the Transvaal may be at once conceded. That which is more difficult to determine is whether it was so widespread, and public opinion so lax, as to justify its being used as an indictment against the whole state.

Missionary statements are usually vague and in general terms, without details of place and date, and most of the authenticated instances come, strangely enough, from the Boer records themselves. The farmers might claim in their defence that they were equally often the victims of theft at the hands of the natives, and here it is the missionaries who supply testimony. The Journal of the Rev. Mr. Helmore describes a meeting between the chief Mahura and some Boer representatives in May, 1853, at which the farmers brought up a number of complaints of the lifting of their cattle.[1] The account was written by one who sympathized with the natives, but it is easy to see that Mahura was doing his best to burke enquiry. Ashton, writing from Kuruman in 1854 in criticism of the Sand River Convention, said : " Another result of this insane policy will be *war*. The natives seem determined to expend what ammunition they have at present on the Boers. The spirit of war is now becoming rampant. The chiefs are encouraging thefts upon the Boers in order to bring them out in arms : a band of known thieves has just returned with Boer horses, and the probability is—before this letter reaches you the country will be involved in war."[2]

Native thefts might easily lead to a new charge against the farmers. After discovering his loss a farmer would at once ride over to the nearest kraal. Though against the law it was practically his only means of redress. If he found his animals and took them back the chief would report the incident to the missionary as another " unprovoked aggression." This was the

[1] L.M.S., Likhatlong, 7th May, 1853. [2] L.M.S., Kuruman, 7th May, 1854.

more likely if the thieves had followed the custom that obtained in the Cape Colony and taken the precaution to arrange for the reception of the stolen cattle at a kraal other than their own. On the other hand, personal recovery of stolen cattle opened the door to fresh scandals. The " recovery " of stolen cattle " might simply disguise bare-faced theft. This explains the absolute prohibition of individual dealings with kraals in the Pretorius-Potgieter agreement. Livingstone tells a story that may quite well be true.[1] A farmer drove one of his own goats into the kraal of a native neighbour by night. The next day he appeared at the native's dwelling, accused him of stealing the goat, and demanded half a dozen more as compensation. As Livingstone tells it the story is, of course, that of the native, and it is safer to regard the incident as an example of what may often have taken place, rather than as a statement of what actually happened upon a particular occasion.

A good deal of evidence to plundering raids upon native kraals comes from the Boer records. Most of these combined black-birding with plunder, and so belong properly to the chapter upon slavery, but a few instances appear below in which the chief motive seems to have been the capture of cattle. On the 11th April, 1841, Commandant Jan Meyer reported to the Natal Raad that a certain Jan Landman, Wm.'s son, had attacked a chief named Foedo with a following of natives, killed two of his people, and carried off a large number of cattle.[2] Foedo on his side threatened reprisals. The peace of the state was endangered and the Raad acted vigorously. Meyer was to call out an adequate number of burghers as a protection and conduct an enquiry. If Foedo was the injured party he was to have his cattle restored, if he was in the wrong he was to be driven across the Tugela.

On the 29th April, 1842, the Raad received a memorial from thirty-four farmers who had taken part in an expedition against the Kaffirs north of the Vaal River " in order to get plunder,"[3] and complained that they had not received their fair share of the spoil. Enquiry showed that the expedition had brought back not only stolen cattle but also a number of children. The matter

[1] *Missionary Travels and Researches.* [2] Volksraad Minutes.
[3] " Om buit te nemen."

was referred to the Adjunckt Raad of Potchefstroom and the Landdrosts of Potchefstroom and Winburg, with instructions to return the children to their parents and discover and punish the guilty persons severely. The Raad complained that it was most unfortunate that this scandal should arise at a moment when it was doing its best to justify itself in the eyes of the outside world.[1] On the 8th August Landdrost Vermeulen reported that he had recovered eighty-two head of cattle and five native children from the members of the "unlawful commando." He was thanked for his exertions and instructed to continue with the task of recovering the booty.

From the Republic of Ohrigstad no specific examples of marauding raids have come to light, and the next reference is from the minutes of the Krijgsraad, the council of commandants which was the only executive committee that the Republic possessed. Before the meeting held on the 31st May, 1853, was laid a complaint[2] from a chief named Ramagalabotla to the effect that a field cornet named Hermanus Potgieter had raided a kraal and carried off a large number of "cattle, women and children." (Probably the order in which the losses are given is that of the chief himself.) The Krijgsraad detailed field cornet A. v. d. Walt to visit Potgieter and to see that the cattle, the women and the children were restored. Potgieter was censured for endangering the peace and safety of the land and for declining to appear before the Krijgsraad to answer the charge against him. In view of his contumacy the matter was referred to the court of Landdrost and Heemraaden to form the basis of a criminal prosecution.

What action was taken it is impossible to say. The extraordinary thing is that, if the dates of the documents are to be believed, Field Cornet Potgieter, almost exactly a year later, was involved in an offence of a precisely similar nature. Two statements,[3] dated 14th May, 1854, one of which appears to be an affidavit, describe an attack alleged to have been made by Potgieter on Ramagalabotla on the 4th May.

But for the difference in the date of the year it would be much simpler to regard them as referring both to the same atrocity. The letter dated 14th May would then contain the evidence, in-

[1] Volksraad Minutes. [2] R. 541/53. [3] R. 633/54.

cluding the affidavit, that was submitted to the Krijgsraad on the 31st May, and on which it based its decision. The difference in date need prove no difficulty. The documents are not originals, signatures and all are in the same handwriting, and the discrepancy may quite easily be a copyist's error. The two sets of documents, however, are not at present grouped together: as their serial numbers indicate, at least ninety-two sets of papers separate them from one another.

If this interpretation be accepted, and the two sets taken to refer to the same incident, the story would run as follows: On the 14th May Commandant H. J. van Stade sent a letter to the Commandant General to this effect: "Sir, in my neighbourhood recently at Mooi River I heard of a scandalous thing in my district: the field cornet Hermanus Potgieter went to the kraal of a Kaffir tribe Maglabotla and the captain with one other took to flight, his women and children and people fell into the hands of the same Potgieter, who has driven them to Waterberg, whereupon the Kaffirs' upperchief and also the residents[1] have come to me, and that Kaffir also is one of the most peaceful that are under the emigrants."

Attached to the letter are declarations to the same effect from W. H. Boshof, Gert Oosthuizen, C. F. Boshof and van Stade himself, each of whom added the information that the marauding party numbered twenty in all. The declarations were then laid before the Krijgsraad. Potgieter was summoned to attend and answer the charges laid against him but failed to appear. Field Cornet V. d. Walt was instructed to interview him and secure the return of the stolen property. The raid was then reported to the Landdrost for further action against the culprits.

If, on the other hand, the dates of the documents be accepted as correct, it would appear that Potgieter, after committing one atrocity for which at the least he was severely censured, celebrated its anniversary by another on exactly the same lines. This is very difficult to believe. The chief's peacefulness, to which Van Stade bore witness, would naturally make him an inviting object of attack, but the story if true would convict Potgieter of a regrettable lack of originality.

[1] *I.e.*, the *white* residents.

The relations of the farmers with their servants formed the basis of another charge. Here they were probably patriarchal enough in their methods, and as early as 1841 Pretorius had found it necessary to beg a meeting of farmers at Vet River so to deal with the natives as each should feel himself able to answer to his Creator.[1] These were Potgieter's people of the District of Winburg, and their reputation in the rest of South Africa was not of the best. Another hint of their outlook is to be found in the Thirty Three Articles (drawn up by Potgieter's followers at Potchefstroom in 1844 and accepted by the United Volksraad as a sort of constitution at its first meeting in May, 1849), which gave each master permission to " exercise a reasonable discipline over his servants."[2]

This permission is capable of an alarmingly wide interpretation, though guarded somewhat by the clause that followed : " but no ill treatment : if that happens, the servant who has been ill treated shall be taken away, and the master punished according to the nature of the case." A similar clause is to be found in a sort of constitution drawn up by Potgieter's party in September, 1846 at Ohrigstad, requiring " that the field cornets in their respective districts shall keep a watchful eye that no ill treatment is committed by the white inhabitants upon Kaffirs in their service and others."[3]

Corporal punishment of servants was thus recognised by law, but there is no need to imagine that they often had to complain of barbarous cruelty. It is not unknown for missionaries at the present day both to recommend and to practice corporal punishment in dealing with refractory members of their flocks, and admiring native congregations still tell a story of the prowess of a bishop which would have a devastating effect upon the good ladies of a missionary tea ! The whole force of the law depends naturally upon the interpretation given to the phrase " reasonable discipline," but the farmers' conception of its limits may be judged by a law against the ill treatment of native servants passed some years later on the 15th March, 1853.[4] Masters were forbidden to put their servants in irons or keep them under restraint. These punishments were to be imposed only by a competent legal

[1] R. 90a./41. [2] Eybers : *Select Constitutional Documents*, p. 349.
[3] Soutter Collection, Pretoria Archives. I, 6. [4] Volksraad Minutes.

tribunal, and any farmer who broke the law was liable to a fine of Rds. 25,[1] to be doubled for any succeeding penalty. The same law ordered field cornets to pay special attention to the prevention of cruelty to servants, and a penalty was prescribed for such officials as were remiss in this part of their duties. A clause to the same effect was included in the law regulating the custom of apprenticeship.[2] Masters to whom native children were apprenticed were required to give guarantees of good treatment, and if convicted of cruelty towards them were to be declared incapable of possessing or acquiring apprentices for the future. That this law was not absolutely a dead letter appears from the trial of a Lydenburg farmer who was charged with its infraction.[3]

The laws against the ill treatment of native servants, and especially their repetition, are a proof that they were needed, though they are proof also that the government contained men who were prepared to initiate and pass them. Several of the laws—that against encroachment on native territory, that against the ill treatment of servants, and a prohibition of the slave trade—were all passed by the Raad in 1853, and the fact suggests the influence of Her Majesty's Government. The Sand River Convention had been concluded in the previous year, and it had been made very clear to the Boers that its concessions were dependent upon the abolition of slavery and the absence of any cause for complaint on the part of the natives.

Not many cases of wanton cruelty have come to light, the raiders being usually content with carrying off their spoil of children and cattle, but one particularly horrible case is recorded for 1854 on the edge of the district of Zoutpansberg. This was the cold-blooded extermination of the tribe of Makapan, a petty chieftain whose name still appears on the map in Makapanspoort. The story is too well known to need more than mention. Though easily the most ghastly deed that could be laid to the account of the Boers, even the missionaries seem to have treated it with considerable scepticism, and Mr. Freeman refused to believe the story.

In 1854 a hunting party of members of the Potgieter clan visiting the kraal was set upon and overwhelmed. The cause is

[1] About £1 18*s*. [2] See page 180 below. [3] See page 165 below.

unknown : Theal thinks[1] that its members may have committed some outrage, or possibly that they merely violated a tribal taboo. Apparently some were tortured and mutilated before being put to death. A punitive commando was called out and found the bodies of the murdered hunters, but could not come to blows with Makapan, who retired with his followers into a huge cave. An attempt to smoke them out was a failure, and while blockading the cave the Commandant General, head of the Potgieter family, was killed by a stray shot from the interior. The commando then sat down grimly before the mouth, repelled a sortie in force, and remained until every native inside, innocent and guilty alike, had perished of thirst.

It was a barbarous deed, and though the barbarity may be explained it cannot be justified by any amount of provocation. It was the work of hard men, enraged by the death of their leader, and bent on avenging the torture of their friends and companions. The most that can be said in defence of the Transvaalers is that it was the work of the farmers of Zoutpansberg, a community apart from the rest of the Republic, of harsher character and worse reputation than those of the south. The district was the last retreat of Commandant General A. H. Potgieter, and it long remained the refuge of separatism in the Transvaal and the home of lost causes.

The only specific example of barbarity in the relations between master and servant comes from the Republican papers, which record the trial of a certain J. C. Espag, living in the Lydenburg District, on a charge of ill treating his apprentices.[2] The case was heard on the 22nd October, 1852, a few days, that is, after the attack on Sechele on the other side of the Republic. A man named Joshua Joubert was prosecutor, and Espag was accused of maltreating two native children, aged about eleven and nine years respectively. He did not appear in person but sent a long written memorial maintaining that the children had been naughty and that the punishment he had inflicted had been suitable and moderate. It ended with a whining and somewhat irrelevant appeal *ad misericordiam* in which the defendant pleaded that he was an old man stricken of God. The children were produced in court and the thrashing that they had received was shown to

[1] *History of South Africa since* 1795. III. 417. [2] R. 446b/52.

have broken their skin. Espag was found guilty and sentenced to be deprived of all his servants and to pay a fine of Rds. 50 together with the costs of the action, which amounted, apparently, to another Rds. 26.[1]

A strange incident followed, which may have been either an attempt to defeat the sentence of deprivation by a family arrangement, or an indication that apprentices were scarce and that men's minds turned to every possible source of supply. Immediately after sentence had been passed the defendant's heirs put in a claim to his servants, pleading that they should be kept in the family instead of being distributed by lot as if they had been new arrivals. The application was granted and the servants were accordingly divided among the petitioners, to be apprenticed until they came of age.

There is no doubt that the missionaries often overstated their case. Chapman's opinion of their credulity has already been quoted, and they seem to have made little allowance for the natural tendency to exaggerate on the part of the wronged person, a native, seeking to sow discord between the whites who threatened his independence. Another writer calling himself "Bamangwato" endorsed Chapman's opinion in considerably more forcible language.[2] Like a Sheffield invoice, he said, at least 55% of missionary allegations had to be deducted to begin with, and "Rev. gentlemen" often found themselves unable to substantiate their charges because the man who told the man who told them had since departed this life!

Moffat himself, the senior missionary in the Kuruman district, who had lived through the time of the great Mantatee horde and all its troubles, was responsible for an extraordinary prophecy. Writing from Kuruman in November, 1852, under the influence, it must be conceded, of the Sand River Convention and the attack upon Sechele, he says:[3] "If the [British] government does not speedily undo what they have done and adopt immediate measures to put a stop to the progress of the Boers in the work of human destruction we unhestitatingly affirm that ere long the colonials may prepare themselves to receive tens of thousands expected from their country, with nothing before them but a pining death

[1] Altogether a little less than £6.
[1] *To Ophir Direct*, p. 27.
[3] L.M.S., Kuruman, 22nd November, 1852.

in the desert, and who will rush down from the north like ravening wolves, as Bears robbed of their whelps to seek graves in the land of the white man. The colony would then require a commissariat compared with which the past would be only a shadow."

Moffat knew, better than any one, the devastation of thirty years before, he remembered the great rush of refugees to the Colony to escape the Mantatee horde, and staked his reputation that the farmers were about to cause another stampede compared with which his previous experience would be "only a shadow." In actual fact nothing of the sort happened, and after the preliminary friction on the frontier both parties settled down to a sort of mutual toleration which lasted until the Stellaland and Goshen trouble in 1882 raised once more the question of the Hunters' Road. The rash extravagance of a missionary of so much experience as Moffat makes it increasingly difficult to accept at their face value similar statements made by his younger and more enthusiastic colleagues.

The student of missionary literature is beset by a recurring doubt as to the result had the missionaries shown themselves as longsuffering with the farmers as with their own flocks, and instead of sending off their schedules of denunciation to subscribers in England, to Downing Street, or the harassed administration at the Cape, had gone quietly but firmly to lay their complaints before the Republican officials. They would have met with much evasion, undoubtedly, probably with much bare-faced prevarication, but in the long run their steady pressure would have achieved much more than a method that merely hardened the farmer into sullen churlishness. Even if they had been rejected with contumely their case would have been proportionately stronger.

The actual experience of such missionaries as attempted the method of personal remonstrance was not discouraging. When approached in a conciliatory spirit the Boer officials relaxed considerably their traditional opposition to missionaries and proved unexpectedly obliging and accommodating. Even the much-injured Livingstone found that a few words of quiet conversation achieved more than all his reports to the Directors. Shortly before his visit to a chief named Mankopane in 1847 the chief's herds had been raided by a gang of emigrants, who carried off fifty sheep and fifty head of cattle before proceeding to plunder

the next tribe in the same way.[1] To the modern reader much is explained by the fact that Livingstone learned that " a son of Conrad Buijs " was among the marauders, though the missionary probably did not understand Buijs's precise position. That individual from his vantage ground in the Zoutpansbergen raided impartially both eastern and western frontiers of the Republic, but the upshot of the affair is important. Livingstone reported the raid to the neighbouring commandant, who " professed entire ignorance of the transaction and promised to investigate the matter and apply the law in the case."

The incident bears out what was, in fact, Livingstone's own earlier judgment on the subject of the relations between the Boers and the natives. In the same letter he writes : " In other ways of maltreatment [the Boers] are not so unanimous.[2] The better-disposed emigrants lament the evils they witness. But the absence or laxity of law leaves the natives open to the infliction of inexpressible wrongs." Certainly his letter gives no indication that the Commandant was anything but sincere in his promise to investigate the raid. A change came over Livingstone's attitude later on, and his published works belie the moderation of his earlier letters, but this change may not unnaturally be attributed to what happened at Kolobeng, and the destruction, for which he held the Boers responsible, of his library and medical stores.

The evidence detailed above has not done much to clear up the question of the truth of the charges commonly alleged against the Boers. It may be said with certainty that Livingstone, Chapman and their friends, when they accused the farmers generally of maltreating native servants and plundering weaker kraals, did not speak out of simple spleen or without justification. On the other hand, it was possible for a court to try and condemn a farmer who had thrashed his apprentices savagely, while both the Natal Raad and the Transvaal Krijgsraad were ready to investigate charges made against their own people and to condemn the guilty party. This tends to show that the government and ruling farmers disapproved of the glaring outrages that came to their notice. But the government was elective and democratic, responsible to its constituents in a way

[1] L.M.S., Kuruman, 17th March, 1847.
[2] That is, beside the Labour Tax, on which Livingstone found them generally agreed.

impossible at the present day, and it may thus fairly claim to have been representative of the opinions of at least a majority of the burghers of the Republic.

The final verdict upon the question of violence must be that serious abuses were known to occur, but that the government disapproved, and took what action it could to punish marauders. At the same time it was too weak, and the public conscience too lax, to allow of much more than ineffectual protest: scoundrels and marauders like Buijs seem to have been able to do very much what they pleased.[1]

[1] In all fairness to the South African Republic it should be pointed out that even the British Authorities who took over from the Republic of Natal found it difficult to check the activities of marauders. Lieutenant Governor West wrote: "On the 21st December I received information that some of the Klip River farmers had forcibly carried off 5 children (3 of whom have since been restored) from a native kraal." 17, 1, 1848. P.P. England, XXXVI, p. 467.

CHAPTER IX.

LABOUR AND SLAVERY, I.

The Apprentice Question.

The native question in South Africa has been defined as predominately a question of land, but this is only half the truth. The native question is quite as much a matter of labour. To the white man in South Africa the native races are so many potential labourers, and since the day of his first arrival in the country his ingenuity has been devoted to exploiting that labour to the best possible advantage. Even the Hottentot vagrancy question appealed to the farmer as a means of ensuring regularity in a supply of labour. The native reserves of the present day are disliked as places where so much good labour is running to waste, and a satisfactory native policy would be one to extricate the unwilling native from his kraal and put him to a "useful" occupation.

The labour difficulty was still more urgent in the days of the Trek. The farmers were pressing into country that was entirely undeveloped, no European would work for hire where land was free and all were equally devoid of capital, and no hut tax drove the tribal native to seek service with the whites. The farmer was prepared to make the most of any source that presented itself and to use all his ingenuity in devising fresh supplies.

The condition of affairs was unhealthy, but the champions of the native races weakened their own cause by lack of discrimination. The Evangelical Revival had resulted in a most salutary hatred of slavery, but many cases of the exploitation of native labour, though quite indefensible, fell far short of servitude. Some are revealed by investigation to have been comparatively innocent, yet the opprobrious term was hurled at all impartially. Defenders of the Republics could prove without much difficulty that the name did not in fact apply, and thus escaped condemnation when it was actually deserved.

The share of the slave question in the early days of the Trek was discussed above, but charges of slavery were renewed with the establishment of the Republic of Natal. Lord John Russell, then Secretary of State for the Colonies, forwarded to the Governor a letter he had received from a correspondent[1] whose name he suppressed. The writer criticised the farmers with vigour if with little knowledge, representing the murder of Tambuza, bad enough in all conscience, as having occurred " in a time of profound peace." He went on to allege that " upwards of one thousand blacks were brought into Natal and assigned as apprentices (slaves ?) by fours to each family. One or two individuals refusing to take any were suspected of disaffection and closely interrogated as to their reason for so doing." Similar charges appeared in Cape Town newspapers and denials were printed in the *Zuid Afrikaan* from P. Zietsman, landdrost of Pietermaritzburg, and Commandant H. S. Lombard.[2] Each was prepared to allow that slave dealing might have been tolerated by Potgieter at Mooi River, but both maintained that since October of 1841, when he had made his submission to the Volksraad of Natal, anything of the sort had come to an end. Zietsman says: " Potgieter, when separated from us, I believe, committed such a crime, but since he has been under our rule no slave-dealing has been permitted the other side of the Drakensberg."

The Raad itself had been very half-hearted in defence of Potgieter. On the 12th April, 1841, it recorded that it had seen charges against him in the *Zuid Afrikaan*,[3] but was content with saying that it had no evidence in the matter and did not intend to take part in the accusations.[4] In Potgieter's favour is the fact that he was on quite good terms with many of the missionaries whom he met. The charges of slave-dealing may be an instance of party jealousy among the Boers, which did not stick at imputing serious offences to one who declined to admit the authority of the Republic of Natal.

Zietsman went on to say that the laws of Natal definitely forbade the slave trade, and instanced a fact that had probably come before him in his official capacity. A trader had en-

[1] Bird: *Annals*, I, 627. Was it by any chance " that distinguished ornament of science and friend of humanity, etc."—Sir John Herschel ?

[2] Bird: *Annals*, II, 62.

[3] An earlier letter than that quoted in Bird.

[4] Volksraad Minutes.

deavoured to smuggle five young Zulus out of the country, but had been compelled by " the landdrost "[1] to release them. Further evidence of the attitude of the Republic is to be found in the proposals for an alliance between Natal and Cape Colony.[2] Realizing that the British Government was firm upon the subject of slavery the Volksraad bound itself not to carry on dealings in slaves and not to permit nor encourage any sort of slave trade. No facilities would be granted in its harbours to vessels carrying slaves or engaged in the slave trade.

The basis of the charges of slavery against the Republic of Natal is to be found in the custom of " apprenticeship," an institution that had been developed, strangely enough, from British precedents. The English word was invariably used, under various strange spellings, and a new verb " inboeken " was coined for common speech : the normal Dutch word for apprentice does not once appear in the records. The term was foreign to the habits of mind of the farmers, and never really understood by them. It depended for its meaning upon common usage. Though the original intention may have been clear individuals must often have looked upon it as merely a veil required by an unintelligible convention to cover the exploitation of child labour.

In the Cape Colony the various Vagrancy Laws had prescribed " apprenticeship " as a fitting treatment for Hottentots with no fixed home and no regular work, or for Hottentot children brought up by a white farmer. Again, upon the liberation of the slaves throughout the dominions of the British Crown, the condition of slavery was not abolished outright but was commuted to apprenticeship for a term of years. In 1848 Sir Harry Smith had suggested removing Kaffir youths from the frontier and " apprenticing " them to white farmers so that they might learn European agricultural methods.[3] To a farmer, therefore, the word must have meant little more than legalized forced labour, which perhaps did not alter the status of freedom possessed by the individual in question. He can have had no idea of the educational and social implications of the original institution of apprenticeship.

In Voortrekker days apprenticeship, though a new development, was founded upon these precedents. The official explana-

[1] *I.e.*, himself ! [2] R. 72/41. [3] P.P. England, 1849, XXXVI, 23.3.48.

tion of its rise was that the emigrants arriving in Natal found that the troubles of the preceding years had brought into existence that large class of destitute natives that was to give them so much trouble in other ways. Without cattle, gardens or stores of grain they were unable to feed either themselves or their families and often handed over their children to the farmers as servants. Some regulation of their service was obviously required. It seems also, though afterwards questioned by some, that native children often fell into the hands of commandos in an innocent and unavoidable way. Native forces had little conception of regular campaigning and made no provision for retreat. When a defeated army took to flight it left everything, cattle, women and children as spoils of war to the victors. The armies of Tshaka and Umzilikazi were recruited by the capture of children, and the emigrants must often have found numbers of native children on their hands.

In order to dispose of these children and turn them to good account the Volksraad inaugurated a system of apprenticeship.[1] The boys were indentured to a master until the age of twenty-five, and the girls until they reached twenty-one. The employer was required to give guarantees that the child would be well treated, and every apprenticeship was to be registered with the landdrost. The child's apparent age appeared in the contract, and there should have been no possibility of an illegal lengthening of the term. The landdrost was also given the right to make contracts with native parents who wished to bind their children.

So far the institution might pass muster, the only feature to which exception might be taken being the extraordinarily long

[1] The following is a copy of an indenture existing in the Pretoria Archives: Soutter Collection, Packet IV, 18.:

" Zy het door deze kennelijk

Dat Johannes Bodenstein Secretaris van de Volks Raad als daar toe gekwalificeerd, op heden verbonden hebbende de 7 ondergenoemde zolas weeskinderen volgens opgeven van A. W. J. Pretorius dat hij ze heeft bekomen in de veldslag tegens Dingaan waarschijnlijk ouderloos, en een klein Mantattie weeskind met name 1ste Petrus 13 Jaar 2 Zola Jonas oud 11 Jaar 3de Magerman 10 Jaar 4de Job 5 Jaar 5de Afrika 12 Jaar 6de Eva 13 Jaar 7de Katje 12 Jaaren 8 Sara 11 Jaar alle na gissing geschat aan Ands. Ws. Pretorius aan deze Maatschappij behoorende onder voorwaarde nogthans dat gemelde Pretorius gehouden met het nodige voedzel en deksel, en hun verder bekwaam te maken tot hun zelfs onderhoud en geen mishandeling aan hun te plegen tot dat de vijf eerst gemelde de ouderdom van 21 jaaren en de drie laatste tot hunne 18 Jaar zal hebben bereikt na welke tijd zij gerechtig zijn zal of hun eigend huis kost te winnen

Welke doende te

PIETER MAURITZ BURG den 8 September 1843.

J. Bodenstein
Secretaris.

term of apprenticeship, all the more remarkable since the children began to work at a very early age. The indenture quoted in the footnote shows the ages as twenty-one and eighteen, but the longer period was more customary and was adopted in the interior. In its early days the system was not necessarily cruel in working or detrimental to the " apprentice ", and the Rev. J. Archbell, Wesleyan missionary and friend of the Trekkers, defended it in September, 1841, in the *Grahamstown Journal*.[1] " The natives," he wrote, " who are very numerously interspersed in villages among the emigrants, are a perfectly free people, and not the slaves we were some time ago led to suppose them. The principles of freedom have been proclaimed throughout the whole emigration, and those orphans who by war have fallen into their hands are regularly indentured to respectable men, who must possess some reasonable probability of being able to fulfil the terms of the indenture."

Abuses, however, were bound to arise, and some attempt was made to anticipate the worst of these—the establishment of a traffic indistinguishable from the slave trade—by prohibiting the removal of apprentices from Natal. In special circumstances a private individual might obtain permission from the landdrost, but no stranger or trader might convey his servants beyond the jurisdiction of the Republic under a penalty of Rds. 500.[2] There was also a danger that the children deserted by a defeated native army might come to be regarded as part of the spoils of war. Hence many expressed a fear, and claimed that it had been realized in fact, that military expeditions might be undertaken simply in order to capture children. The scarcity of apprentices would then cause their indentures to pass from hand to hand for " transfer fees " that but thinly veiled a purchase price.

On one commando at least—probably that which took part in the final overthrow of Dingaan—no one was allowed to receive more than " two young Zulus " for himself, but the regulation aroused discontent. From a camp on the banks of the Black Umfolosi in February, 1840, the burghers petitioned the Krijgsraad for the restriction to be relaxed.[3] The regulations had laid down that any children left over after the commando had had its

[1] Chase : *Natal Papers*, II 186.
[2] Volksraad Minutes, 4th March, 1840, and 17th November, 1840.
[3] R. 55/40.

share were to be distributed among the main body of the emigrants, but the petitioners complained that those who stayed behind had done nothing to " earn " their apprentices, and suggested that they should be allowed to retain five each for themselves. The document bore sixty-five signatures, and at the foot of the page are scrawled the words " wij heven nog meer pr . . . geen plaas meer."

It might be argued that there is nothing in the actual wording of the petition to which exception can be taken, but there is an unhealthy atmosphere which suggests that the convenience of the individual farmer counted rather than the good of the unfortunate children who had become prizes of war. Native children had become an economic commodity. There is no trace of the answer of the Krijgsraad, but since Lord John Russell's anonymous correspondent told of the thousand children being brought from Zululand and assigned " by fours " to each family the petition may have been granted. If so, the temptation to rummage among defenceless kraals for potential labourers instead of attacking the armies of Dingaan was proportionately increased.

Abuses connected with apprenticeship were not slow in showing themselves. On the 17th November, 1840, the Volksraad prescribed a penalty of Rds. 500 for anyone who " bought or traded for any coloured person."[1] On the 7th April of the next year complaint was made that the penalties had acted as no deterrent " and some inhabitants are carrying on a sort of trade in Zulu children, and many of them have been conveyed outside our territory." The Raad resolved that no one might retain a native child who had not been properly " apprenticed before the landdrost, and that the landdrost should not register any children unless he were satisfied that they had been acquired ' op een regtvaardige of wettige wijze.' "[2] On one occasion the landdrost of Pietermaritzburg was obliged to write to Ohrigstad to demand the return of " a little Kaffir child named Regiena " who had been removed from its parents.[3]

The farmers still continued their search for labour, and on 15th June, 1841, the Commandant General was instructed especially to see that hunting parties setting out under his licence

[1] Volksraad Minutes.
[2] " In a just and lawful manner."
[3] Volksraad Minutes, Ohrigstad, 20th August, 1845.

did not bring back either Zulu cattle or Zulu children.[1] Two days later Field Cornet David Joubert complained that travellers were coming into his ward under the pretext of being settlers and carrying off Zulu children. On the 3rd January, 1842, a certain G. Nel actually complained to the Raad that a Kaffir child he had obtained " while hunting in Zululand " had fled from him and been taken by someone else. It replied, however, that it could not sanction any trading that was against the law.

With the annexation of Natal by Her Majesty's Government the majority of the farmers trekked north. In the interior they continued to develop the institution of apprenticeship, and thither the charges of slavery and black-birding followed them. The Transvaal government was in touch with the London Mission stations along the western border, and when that Society became responsible for the conduct of the controversy the rather vague charges levelled against the Republic of Natal gained in point and vigour. The nearest approach to an " official " expression of the London Society's view is to be found in the account of his visit to South Africa by the Rev. Mr. Freeman, its Home Secretary. " They have taken . . . large numbers of children," he wrote,[2] " to be used as slaves in fact, though not so called. It is *confidently* reported that they have sold them to one another at about £1 per head." From an elderly native who had travelled two hundred miles to see Moffat at Kuruman he had the story of a black-birding raid. Freeman was staying with Moffat and actually saw the man, though he was dependent upon Moffat, of course, for the story.[3]

" He related that some time since, a party of armed Boers came and demanded of the chief the *orphans* who might be there . . . after much altercation, and the steady refusal of the chief to give up the orphans, *the Boers demanded the children of the people.* The mothers ran to hide their children ; the Boers began to seize them and to put them into their waggons ; the men interfered ; the Boers fired, and in the result most of the men were killed defending their families, and the waggons were loaded with children and driven off as booty. Against such outrages there seems to be no relief."

[1] Volksraad Minutes, Natal. [2] *A Tour in South Africa*, p. 274. [3] *Ibid*, p. 260.

Apparently the outrage was committed in 1849 or 1850 about two hundred miles from Kuruman. A circle with that station as centre and a radius of two hundred miles would cut the Transvaal frontier near Zeerust in the Marico District, taking a sweep through the heart of its territory to cross the Vaal near Klerksdorp. Thus the most likely spot for the atrocity would be the Transvaal border near Marico, where Inglis was working. If " most of the men were killed " then the number must have been large, and the outrage upon a large scale. The other missionaries who lived much nearer the site of the alleged massacre made no mention of it in their correspondence, and no trace is forthcoming in the Republican records of an expedition on so large a scale. The safest method of treatment is to discount all that Freeman has to say and refer the residuum to one of the smaller plundering raids which the Republic was unable to put down.

The evidence of Livingstone was more telling. As an eye-witness of the abuses he condemned he was able to draw examples from his own experience, but before discussing his contribution it would be as well to dispose of his story of the attack upon Sechele's stronghold.[1] Here personal troubles have led him into overstatement. " The Commandant Scholtz," he wrote, " has appropriated the children of Sechele to be his own domestic slaves. I was present when one little boy, Khari, the son of Sechele, was returned to his mother; the child had been allowed to roll into the fire and there were three large unbound open sores on different parts of his body. His mother and the women received him with a flood of silent tears."

The capture of the children was Sechele's own fault, due to his rejection of the Commandant's advice to remove the women and children to a place of safety. They were his own women and children, the chief said, and he would do what he liked with his own. The passage about domestic slaves must be an exaggeration. Livingstone says nothing of any objection being made to their return in due course, as he most certainly would if the Boers had put any obstacles in the way. But if Sechele's children were sent back without difficulty they can hardly have been domestic slaves. The most probable explanation is that the

[1] *Missionary Travels and Researches*, p. 125.

children of the chief were handed over to the Commandant of the district for safe keeping.

Livingstone hints also that the children were neglected, if not actually ill-treated, and makes much of the burns upon the child's body. The open fires of native kraals are a frequent cause of wounds of this kind, as mission hospitals know well, and there is no reason to believe that Khari's burns were received in any other way. An impression of artificiality is given to the whole account by Livingstone's reference to the " flood of silent tears " with which the child was welcomed on its return. It sounds suspiciously like a dramatic touch introduced for the benefit of afternoon tea tables and sewing meetings, but in a critical reader arouses feelings of distrust. The absence of any demonstration even from the apathetic women of the Bakwena is surprising, but Livingstone's attempt to fill the gap with talk of " silent tears " is merely grotesque.

In general Livingstone maintained that the Boers were in the habit of making organized forays upon native tribes in order to obtain slaves. He was prepared to allow that the pretext for action might be an anticipated revolt, but they were intended primarily, he averred, in order to secure a supply of children as slaves. " I saw," he continued, " and conversed with children in the houses of Boers who had by their own and their master's account been captured, and in several instances I traced the parents of these unfortunates."[1] The usual plan, however, was to kidnap them so young that they soon forgot their homes, and this, Livingstone said, had been admitted to him by the Boers themselves. Finally, in the attack upon Sechele's town, two hundred of his school children had been carried off into slavery.

Chapman's opinions in the matter may have been influenced by Livingstone, but he too is an independent observer. " The Bouers," he says,[2] " also purchase many children, who with those captured in their wars with the tribes, remain in a condition of slavery until released by death. I have had many of these unfortunate beings offered to me, either in exchange for a horse, a quantity of merchandise or in liquidation of a debt. . . . Two of these wretched little creatures were sold and re-sold, and afterwards redeemed by an agent of Messrs. Young and Co. of Natal . .

[1] *Missionary Travels and Researches*, p. 31. [2] *Travels in Southern Africa*, p. I. 16.

But not only are children thus acquired: men and women, of any age, taken by illegitimate means, are sold or exchanged for cattle or goods."

Chapman's evidence is important. Not only was it the result of personal observation but it illustrates characteristics which, if true, show that the system he described was not simply that known as apprenticeship. He claimed that the children remained slaves "until released by death," that they were treated as the personal property of their "owner," being sold or bartered as ordinary merchandise, and finally, that the system was not restricted to children, but applied to adults as well.

All the local evidence is summed up in the official indictment framed by the Slave Trade Commissioner at Cape Town in a communication[1] to Lord Palmerston of August, 1848. "Reports have for some time past reached this Colony to the effect that the Boers . . . not only make slaves of the natives with whom they are at war, but also deal in slaves with the inhabitants of the Portuguese settlement of Delagoa Bay. Depositions have been made by several individuals who have visited the country above-mentioned, from which it would appear that such a traffic had been carried on, the slaves for the most part being purchased by the Boers, who resort to Delagoa Bay to exchange ivory and cattle for spirits and gunpowder, although some instances are mentioned in which the Portuguese have purchased slaves from the Boers."

The charges are clear and definite. They are fathered by two missionaries, a trader and a Government official. Freeman it is true was only a casual visitor, while the Slave Trade Commissioner, resident a thousand miles away, might be suspected of working up a little agitation now and again to justify his existence.

The statements of Livingstone and Chapman on the other hand cannot lightly be dismissed, since they are based upon first-hand evidence.

The quotations are not always consistent. The Boers are accused by one of obtaining their slaves by means of raids upon native tribes and selling their surplus stock at Delagoa Bay. Another maintained that the slaves were purchased from, instead

[1] Correspondence with the British Commissioner relative to the Slave Trade. Class A., —pp. 85-87. Quoted in the *Dutch Boers and Slavery*, p. 9.

of being sold to, the Portuguese. These inconsistencies may be explained by the fact that Delagoa Bay was the local centre for the slave trade, but in any case they affect matters of detail only. All the witnesses are agreed that slavery was recognized or at least tolerated in the Transvaal, and that the majority of its inhabitants was implicated in transactions involving slavery. Evidence was produced to show that slaves as such were bought and sold in the country, though sometimes disguised under the euphemism of " black ivory." Others, a little better acquainted with the actual condition of affairs in the Republic, attacked the system of apprenticeship or " in booking " as the Boers called it.

The nominal term of years was said to be pure subterfuge, and it was claimed that the condition of servitude had been known to last for life. Others condemned apprenticeship as the cause of kidnapping on a large scale, while a plentiful supply of " orphans " was ensured by attacks on kraals and the murder of their parents. Some kidnapping raids were intended to procure slaves for sale at Delagoa Bay, the local centre of the trade, to which other Boers were accustomed to resort in order to buy slaves for their own use.

These were the charges: what did the Transvaal Boers have to say in the matter ? In the official records, if anywhere, it should be possible to find evidence that has not been doctored to suit a particular view. Slavery and the slave trade as such were formally prohibited more than once in the history of the northern settlements. Formal prohibitions have actually come to light in 1845 (for the Republic of Ohrigstad), in 1852 (just after the Sand River Convention) and in 1857. On the last occasion both buyer and seller were made liable to a fine of £500 sterling. Finally a prohibition of slavery was inserted in the constitution of 1858. This may dispose of the charge of recognizing slavery, but after the first year or two the attack was better informed and came to be directed not so much upon a toleration of slavery as such, as upon what was called " a virtual slavery under the guise of apprenticeship." Once more the custom of apprenticeship must be the subject of the enquiry.

The custom of apprenticeship existed in the interior from early days, but in the absence of definite legislation it may be assumed that it was governed by the custom and experience of

the Republic of Natal. A codifying law was passed by the Volksraad on the 9th May, 1851, under the title of "A law approved by the Volksraad concerning orphans or so-called apprentices, brought in by the Kaffir tribes around us"[1] which gives some idea of the policy of the central authority: the extent to which it was obeyed is another matter. Every person who received a native child or orphan as a "free gift" or "in any other lawful manner" was required to notify the landdrost or field cornet within eight days. At the same time he was to declare its place of origin, apparent age, and the manner in which it had been acquired. The penalty for failing to notify the landdrost was Rds. 5.[2] If the landdrost's enquiries showed that the child had been obtained in an "illegal manner" he was to return it at once to its parents, together with adequate compensation recovered from the guilty party, who was liable also to a penalty ranging from Rds. 50 to Rds. 500.[3]

If the landdrost's enquiries showed that the transaction was in order, he was to enter the name of the child in a special register, together with a record of its previous home, apparent age, the name of the person who had given it to the applicant, and the manner in which the latter had acquired it. A child thus "apprenticed" was to remain in his master's service until he reached the age of twenty-five years, when his dependence would cease, and he would become free. The fee for the registration of an apprentice was Rd. 1.[4] A master who ill-treated his servants forfeited them, was to be declared incapable of indenturing any others, and was liable to further punishment at the discretion of the local magistrate. The case quoted in the previous chapter shows that this was not altogether a dead letter, and that a farmer might be tried and sentenced for cruelty to his apprentices.

Apparently chiefs and heads of kraals were in the habit of making presents of children, presumably "orphans," to the officials of the Republic. In such an event the law prescribed that the official was not to keep the child or children for himself, but was to send them on to the landdrost of the district. Applications were then to be called for from the farmers of the neighbourhood, and the children distributed by lot. From a remark in

[1] Volksraad Minutes. [2] 7/6. [3] From £3 15*s.* to £37 10*s.* [4] About 1*s.* 6*d.*

another Raad resolution[1] which speaks of a " quarterly distribution " it seems likely that a sort of store of children was formed from those who fell to the Republic in various ways, and that these were distributed by lot at fixed intervals.

In the event of the death of the master, or if he were to become incapable of supporting his apprentices, the children were to be passed on to another. The law prescribed that the transfer fee was not to exceed Rds. 30,[2] and that the new ownership should be registered in the ordinary way. Finally, the law strictly forbade the removal of indentured children beyond the boundaries of the Republic. Any person caught endeavouring to do this, or any who aided and abetted any similar infringement of the law, was liable to a fine of not less than Rds. 500.

On the face of it the law was a straightforward attempt to deal with a social problem. The children were assured a good home, " blackbirding " was officially impossible, the apprentices might not be removed beyond the protection of the law, and the establishment of a trade under cover of transfer fees was prohibited in so many words. Only those children in actual need of support might be indentured.

But this will not do : no one can deny that but for their value as potential labourers " orphan " children would have been left, like their aged and infirm relations, to the rough and ready relief systems of their kraals. At bottom the law was one for the regulation of child labour, and not for the care of orphans. Though they may have been forbidden in theory, abuses of all sorts arose in fact, which in some cases came perilously near slavery. There is unimpeachable evidence—that of the Apprentice Law itself—that native children, officially certified to be " orphans " no doubt, were often presented by native chiefs to officials and farmers whom they desired to please. Children, again, were sold by their parents, who now found a financial value in their sons such as they had previously enjoyed in their daughters.

This is the meaning of the regulation which required the landdrost to show the manner in which the children had been procured. It might have been purchase, gift or assignment. It is clear that " indentures " passed from hand to hand, and probably people were not always satisfied with the transfer fee permitted

[1] See page 187 below.

[2] £2 5*s*.

by the government. This led, and again the evidence is unimpeachable, to what was euphemistically called the "sale of indentures," a transaction which was indistinguishable from the sale of the apprentices themselves. In order to procure the necessary "orphans" men like Buijs and Albassini fell back on raids upon kraals which were frankly kidnapping expeditions. The dealers could well guarantee that the children whom they sold were orphans—they were certainly in a position to know! These things certainly happened: the question is how far the Republic itself can be held responsible.

The plundering raids discussed in the preceding chapter made a supply of children one of their aims, but there is evidence of what seems to be a kidnapping raid pure and simple in the proceedings of the Volksraad on the 1st June, 1855. Commandant General M. W. Pretorius asked for an official enquiry into the complaint made by a chief named Seleka that a body of farmers had raided his kraal and carried off thirteen children. The Raad instructed the landdrost of Rustenburg to make a searching enquiry, recover the children and return them to their parents, and punish the guilty according to the law.

Though the result of the enquiry does not appear to have survived, this one piece of evidence acquits the central government of the worst of the charges against it. The Commandant General was anxious to suppress marauding raids, while the Raad was prepared to give him, in name at any rate, the assistance that lay in its power. On the other hand, the circumstances and object of the raiding party are equally clear. It was a blackbirding expedition of the worst type, and the charges of Livingstone and Chapman are substantiated out of the records of the Republic. There must have been a section at least of the Transvaal population devoid of all scruple, and prepared to act in flat defiance of the law. It is possible, of course, to refer all actions of this sort to the floating population of scallywags upon which Theal loads all the blame, but it must be remembered that these, equally with the law-abiding, were burghers of the Republic, whose business was to keep its citizens in order. If the Transvaal community was unable to carry out the elementary function of restraining its criminal population and preventing them from harrying their neighbours, then it clearly forfeited its right to be regarded as a

civilised state. The plea of impotence has often been used to excuse the failure of the South African Republic to control its disorderly citizens, but in view of Shepstone's annexation of 1877 it is one that its friends should have been chary of putting forward.

The evidence of the Rev. Mr. Hofmeyr, at once a missionary and a South African, is interesting. The problem of slavery, he said, was not an easy one to answer.[1] He could not deny that the Portuguese and the Bastards[2] sometimes smuggled children out of the country, but maintained that, so far as he knew, the farmers themselves had no share in the traffic. That the Portuguese and half-castes were concerned may be confirmed from the records. Acting Landdrost Versveld of Lydenburg reported[3] in 1849 that he had heard of an attack on a small tribe made by a chief named Makasoel, whom he described as a dependant of the Portuguese Albassini. The result of the raid was that fifty-three children were carried off, beside a number of cattle. The landdrost ordered Makasoel to restore the children and attend at his office, where the experience of Mahura makes it probable that he was fined for breaking the peace. Versveld had heard also of raids in the Low Country for which he believed Buijs—the Bastard —to be responsible.

That slaves of all ages were bought and sold rests upon Chapman's personal experience, and cannot be discounted entirely, however prejudiced he may have been. Probably a certain number of genuine slaves came from Delagoa Bay, in spite of the prohibition, and were disposed of in the country districts. Though ownership could not have been enforced in the courts, escape was of little practical use. At the same time the alienation of apprentices and the "transfer" of their indentures seem to have been dangerously easy, and sometimes Chapman may have mistaken this disguised form for genuine slavery. The Volksraad found it necessary to insist upon the observance of the law of apprenticeship, and to provide for its publication throughout the country in 1851, 1855 and 1858 at least. The reiteration of the law is the best proof of evasion, persistent if not widespread, and echoes of irregularities were constantly finding their way into the records.

[1] *Twintig Jaren in Zoutpansberg*, p. 27. [2] *I.e.*, men like Buijs and Albassini.
[3] V.R. 83/49.

On the 11th December, 1845, the Ohrigstad Volksraad resolved that no one might convey native children who had been brought from Delagoa Bay further than the Stads River. This points clearly to purchases made from the Portuguese, but it looks rather as though the practice was tolerated so long as the slaves were not actually brought into the village. On the 15th December, 1847, a certain S. van Breda petitioned for permission to import a number of "jonge Negers"—slaves—which he had acquired from the Portuguese and wished to take across the Republic to Potchefstroom.[1] He tried to make his request more palatable by promising to release the children and give them evidence of freedom when they came of age, provided they served until then. It was a test case, and probably others beside van Breda waited to see whether the Raad would legalize the importation of slaves. The Volksraad, however, stood firm, answering van Breda that the importation of young natives had been prohibited in 1845, and that it would not permit the introduction of anything so prejudicial to the welfare of the country as the slave trade.

But though the importation of slaves was forbidden evidence remains that trading for native children was not regarded as illegal. Charges had been laid against a certain Jubert (*sic*) to the effect that he had obtained native children "in an illegal manner." A committee of the Volksraad was appointed to investigate the accusation, examined several native witnesses and reported on the 6th December, 1848.[2] The charges were dealt with under two heads, and on the first the Committee found that one of the young Kaffirs had been procured "in a dishonest manner." Jubert was ordered to forfeit the child, which was to be handed over to the landdrost and drawn for at the next quarterly distribution. No idea is given of the nature of the "dishonesty" for which he was censured, but it seems probable that some sort of personal violence was understood. The second count seems to have been that Jubert traded for native children with cattle. The committee noted that the case did not fall properly within the terms of reference, but gave the somewhat unexpected ruling that the fair exchange of children for cattle could not be considered illegal. The decision must have been something of an *obiter dictum*, but it was based upon the principle

[1] Volksraad Minutes. [2] *Ibid.*

that trade with the natives was nowhere forbidden to members of the Republic. The barter of children, so it argued, was only an incident of trade, and each party in the case in dispute had given his consent and carried out his share in the transaction. There was no need, therefore, for the Volksraad to intervene.

How the Committee reconciled this award with the prohibition of the slave trade, and what its own definition of slavery could have been, are questions not easy to answer. The sale of human labour in the person of the labourer himself, without consulting his wishes or his interest, seems to be one of the essential characteristics of slavery. Barter is only a particular kind of sale and the transaction was clearly immoral. The line of thought along which the Ohrigstad Committee seems to have worked to its conclusion was that the forcible seizure of children was illegal, but that if the parents, or someone in authority at the kraal, wished to sell a child the matter simply became a question of trade. As long as the seller was satisfied with the transaction the responsibility was his, and it was not the business of the Volksraad to interfere. Some people, however, could not have been satisfied, or the matter would not have been raised at all, and the fact that the Raad found it necessary to discuss the question at all may be taken as evidence to the existence of at least the ten righteous men within the city.

The question soon came up before the United Volksraad. At its first meeting at Derdepoort in 1849 the Thirty-Three Articles drawn up by Potgieter in 1844 had been accepted as a sort of code of law.[1] Two of the Articles refer to the native question. One, discussed above, dealt with the treatment of native servants, the other, number 28, reads as follows : " No person or persons shall have the right to visit the dwellings of any natives to carry away children in an illegal manner ; those breaking this regulation shall be punished with a fine of Rds. 500,[2] or imprisonment for six months and the stolen children shall be returned to their parents."

This is a prohibition of kidnapping raids, but the question of trading in native children came up before the Krijgsraad on the 31st May, 1853, in connection with Bushmen.[3] This primitive

[1] The Thirty-Three Articles appear in the *Lokale Wetten*, and in Eybers, *Constitutional Documents*, p. 349.
[2] £37 10*s*.
[3] R. 541/53.

race was suffering the pressure not only of the whites but also of the more highly organized Bantu races. It may be that Bushmen parents had embarked upon an extensive traffic in their families, but it seems more likely that both whites and blacks were taking advantage of their weakness to hunt down the little isolated groups of aborigines and carry off their children. The Krijgsraad enjoined upon the Commandants and field cornets, that is upon the local officials of the Republic, " to allow absolutely no such purchase and trade in Bushman children." Against the illegal seizure of such children the law was already in existence, and instructions were given that it should be put in force against those who infringed it. Public opinion in the South African Republic, however, was in the same lax condition as at Ohrigstad, and evidence quoted in Appendix II shows that in 1864 even the State President was quite prepared to embark on a little deal in apprentices.

The union of the parties at Derdepoort was followed by the codification of the law dealing with apprenticeship : the next occasion on which that institution figured was on the 20th May, 1850.[1] Here too, some attempt was made to prevent the abuse of the law degenerating into too serious a scandal. A meeting had been arranged between the Landdrost of Lydenburg and the native chiefs of his district, and the Raad resolved that no one was to take advantage of the meeting to procure native children for himself. If any genuine orphans were found the Commandant might, after careful enquiry into their condition, indenture them to regular applicants in the usual way. The resolution suggests a strange picture of what the meeting might be. It seems to expect the chiefs to arrive with a crowd of children for sale and embark upon a busy scene of bargaining with the European hangers-on who accompanied the landdrost. Evidently the chiefs were not slow to realize that the discovery of " orphans " among their people might become a profitable source of revenue.

Later in the year a " provisional meeting " of the Raad considered an application for the abrogation of certain conditions of the law from H. de Clercq, Landdrost of Lydenburg.[2] The Landdrost wished to be allowed to keep a native child which he claimed had been given him by Mswazi as a personal mark of

[1] Volksraad Minutes. [2] Minutes for 24th August, 1850.

favour. To have granted the request meant a dispensation from two distinct laws, that regulating the receiving of presents by officials as well as that of apprenticeship, and considerable prospect of private gain would have been opened up for those functionaries who had dealings with the natives. The Raad rejected the request and ordered the Landdrost to carry out the law, in other words to retain the child until the next distribution and to pay over the registration fee into the general revenue of the state. This decision was endorsed at the next full meeting of the Volksraad.

With the exception of a mere enforcement of the law of 1850 the Raad did not deal again with the question of apprenticeship before the promulgation of the first Grondwet, but though scanty the references have served to make the institution fairly clear. The desire of the authorities to discountenance slavery was no doubt sincere—suppression was the guarantee of their independence. There is something suspicious, however, in the regular supplies of " orphans " that were forthcoming, and the way in which their numbers were maintained over a long period. There is no evidence to determine the number of apprentices indentured in the early days of the Transvaal. Only one sheet of the Ohrigstad register has survived, but this shows that thirteen children were " booked " on a single day. At Lydenburg, between 12th August, 1851, and the 13th December, 1858, the Landdrost registered 214 varying in age between four months and twenty years, or about thirty per year.[1]

Genuine cases of destitution no doubt did exist. Hofmeyr corroborates the statement that a commando after a brush with a native tribe would often find numbers of children deserted by their parents and be obliged in common humanity to carry them off to save them from death by exposure.[2] Again he says, " This also I know, that a Boer came home with a Kaffir youngster and said he had found him in the veld one day with a Captain who said to him—" I cannot feed this child, if you give me a blanket, take him, if not I am going to kill him." ' The third Appendix gives an example of a similar claim.

On the other hand the existence of apprenticeship opened up great opportunities of illegitimate gain. Freeman's account of

[1] Most of them seem to have been between four and fourteen years of age.

[2] *Twintig Jaren in Zoutpansberg*, p. 28.

a kidnapping raid may be highly coloured or based upon insufficient evidence, but the records show that these raids happened in actual fact. Children must often have been sold by their parents, while an unscrupulous chief could easily gain the friendship of neighbouring farmers by the provision of child labour. The purchasers seem to have been pleased enough to shirk the responsibility of the traffic, so long as they could satisfy the bare requirements of the law. The Volksraad may have legislated against abuse, but its laws were often mere pious expressions of opinion, while the state of the country and the absence of any body of officials made their execution more than doubtful.

Domestic labour in the interior long retained many of the characteristics of apprenticeship. The writer once heard a lady describe her first experience of keeping house when she came up from the coast nearly sixty years ago. Her brother undertook to procure domestic assistance and to her horror appeared with half-a-dozen naked children who had to be clothed and trained from the very beginning. She discovered afterwards that similar children formed the domestic staff of all the farm houses of the neighbourhood. They were procured through the good offices of a neighbouring chief; their services were valued at a calf annually and the parents appeared once a year to receive the pay. They remained with the family until they grew up, and one or two even longer. Though technically " free " as opposed to the indentured " apprentice " the position of these children was much the same. Probably the only difference noticed by the parents was that the labour of the apprentice was paid for in advance, that of the " free " child in instalments.

To the farmer the chief advantage of child labour must have been that it set free adults for work on the lands. Taking it altogether it can hardly have been cheap, whether paid for in advance or annually, but the children could make themselves useful in the comparatively light work of the house, and the labour shortage was sufficiently acute to encourage a farmer to cultivate any source of supply. In the house they were probably treated kindly enough as a general rule, and the records show that a flogging that broke the skin was considered brutal, while the person guilty of such treatment was disqualified from ever employing native children again.

What happened in the Transvaal did not pass unnoticed in the rest of South Africa. There were many who felt that the establishment of independent states in the interior was a grave mistake, and urged Her Majesty's Government to proceed to annexation. The ruling party in the United Kingdom, though opposed to the extension of territory, was notoriously conscious of its responsibilities toward the native races, and upon this characteristic the annexationists determined to play. Their policy was to discredit the independent governments of the interior by proving that their native policy involved the revival of all those characteristics that British administration had checked in Cape Colony, and the Blue Book of 1849 sums up the evidence that they had been able to collect. The despatch of 24th February, 1848, from Lieutenant Governor West was supported by various affidavits sworn before officials of the Natal administration. Those of two natives, Mabaleni, described as "a Bechuana of the tribe Amantebele," and Hlangwana, whose name sounds Zulu, were made before Shepstone, then Diplomatic Agent to Native Tribes.[1]

Mabaleni testified that for eight months he had been in the service of a Boer named Hans, of the party of Commandant General A. H. Potgieter, who lived near Ohrigstad. He followed his master in an attack upon Umzilikazi in which the Boers were repulsed. On their return journey the farmers attacked a chief named Langa, without any provocation, and carried off a large number of children. "Many of the Boers," he said, "were disgusted at these proceedings, and, refusing both cattle and children, went home. My master was one of these; he, with several others, killed no one." After the return of the commando to Ohrigstad the opposite party called Potgieter to account and the quarrel became so bitter that shots were exchanged, though apparently no one was hurt.[2] Soon afterwards Potgieter attacked the "Umlizzy" tribe, being assisted by the Amahlwenga, a clan that usually helped him in his raids.

Mabaleni then went home to his kraal, but on his deciding to go to work in Natal "my chief Maboko[3] desired me to find Somtsew[4] (the Diplomatic Agent) and to tell him their position with the

[1] P. P. England, 1849, XXXVI, pp. 475-8.

[2] That the expedition against Umzilikazi led to much bitter controversy is corroborated by a long and confused account in the Ohrigstad Minutes.

[3] The chief known to the farmers as Mapoch. [4] *i.e.* Shepstone himself.

Boers. How their chiefs are tied up and flogged for nothing at all, how their children are constantly taken away from them and made slaves of by the Boers . . . Children taken in this manner are sold by one Boer to another. The price varies from three to five cattle. The Portuguese bring their slaves from Delagoa and sell them to the Boers." The evidence of the second native, Hlangwana, adds little that is new. He visited Ohrigstad as the servant of a farmer named Tredoux, and saw some Bechuana children in the houses of the farmers there. Some of the Boers, whether in earnest or fun, accused him of being " an English spy " and threatened to shoot him. His master, he said, encouraged them to do this as he wanted to get a new servant, but he escaped by saying that a scar upon his head had been caused by ill-treatment from an English master.

The introduction of the spy motive into Hlangwana's story is puzzling. The records show that a month earlier his master Tredoux had actually informed the Raad that whatever was done in Ohrigstad was known a few days later in Pietermaritzburg, and that someone evidently had been playing the spy.[1] No one, however, can seriously have believed that the native Hlangwana was possessed of confidential information, and the whole episode is rather curious. A certain grim humour arises from the fact that the Boers had proof positive that the English barbarously ill-treated their native servants. They had actually seen the scar on the victim's head !

The evidence can hardly be accepted at face value. Even though Hlangwana may not have been a spy sent by Shepstone to collect evidence against the northern Republic, it is evident that the statements in the Blue Book have been subjected to an editorial blue pencil. Instead of the verbosity and repetition of native evidence they present a terse crisp narrative style. Most probably Shepstone helped out the witnesses by occasional questions, and their influence in shaping the replies cannot be overlooked. Mabaleni had been sent with the specific object of making out a case against the farmers, and it must have been evident that the Diplomatic Agent was not averse to hearing evidence unfavourable to the Boers. The share of Shepstone in collecting evidence for this despatch suggests that, even in 1847,

[1] Volksraad Minutes, 3rd November, 1847.

his mind was busy with that annexation of the Transvaal that he was himself to carry out thirty years later.

The Europeans who gave evidence were Johannes Bruwer, who made an affidavit before the Crown Prosecutor at Port Natal on the 17th January, 1848, and Johannes Frederik Tredoux, Hlangwana's master, a farmer at Umgeni. Bruwer said that he had heard of Potgieter's attack upon "Marisee," a Mantatee chief, and that he had carried off many children. "I did not hear of this," he says, "from any of the Boers who were present at these proceedings but from others. The Boers generally were very violent against Potgieter for these proceedings." He had heard further of the attack upon Umzilikazi mentioned in Mabaleni's evidence, but not of the plundering raid on Langa. Tredoux's evidence was more valuable. He had been in the Transvaal and obtained it first-hand, but it does not serve to enhance the credit of Hlangwana. The latter, it appears, had deserted from his master at Ohrigstad, and may have made up the story about the threat of shooting in order to excuse himself.

On the point of slavery Tredoux says: "On my way to Ohrigstad I met a Portuguese trader named Albazini, who resides at Delagoa Bay. He had two waggons with merchandise, powder and lead. I could not speak to him, or understand him at all. He has a black interpreter and a few slaves—young boys—I cannot say how many." At Ohrigstad Tredoux had seen a good many native children, who appeared to be in the service of the people. He had heard from many of the Boers that they dealt in slaves with the Portuguese: Albassini had offered him a slave for £15.

Neither of these statements sounds spontaneous, and their general tone suggests that the published version was obtained by dropping the questions in a regular catechism and turning the replies into a continuous narrative. Sometimes, as in the words quoted above, it is easy to imagine what questions were actually put. "What did he have with him?" "What did he say to you?" "How did you converse then?" "Did he have any slaves with him?" and so on can each be fitted into its place. Probably any individuals who had been lately in the Transvaal were sent for and interrogated to see whether they could establish the complicity of the emigrant farmers in the slave trade. This

must be kept in mind when appraising the evidence. There is a great deal of difference between the spontaneous denunciation of evil customs by a horrified observer and the cautious statements of a witness being examined by an advocate anxious to establish a particular case. It must not be forgotten either that the evidence in the Blue Book is a careful selection from the whole body of the material, otherwise its presence in the Parliamentary Paper is pointless. Lieutenant Governor West or Mr. Theophilus Shepstone, whoever it was, had no higher card to play.

The evidence does not establish any new fact. Mabaleni and Bruwer between them accuse Potgieter of marauding raids, but each was certain that his conduct evoked fairly general condemnation. There is evidence to connect a Goanese named Albassini and the Portuguese in general with the slave trade, while there is confirmation for the charge that the Boers used to buy slaves from the Portuguese market, but in any case the slave trade of Delagoa was not in dispute. This may seem like undue scepticism, but in an agricultural country of scanty population and few amusements scandal and rumour are rife and facts liable to tremendous exaggeration. A great deal of the slavery agitation may be explained in this way. It must not be forgotten that the Boers had their own rumours and their scandalmongers, and were convinced, upon evidence just as unimpeachable, that the missionaries were plotting their overthrow. They had native evidence for the fact that the missionaries encouraged the tribes to rebel, and offered them arms and ammunition as the price of their conversion to Christianity. No doubt the allegations were untrue and absurd, but the evidence was quite as good as much of that against the farmers, and must be accepted with the same amount of reserve.

It should be possible now to arrive at some sort of verdict on the question of slavery. The first fact to emerge is that conditions in the north and east differed from those in the rest of the Transvaal. Slavery was here connived at, and a number of slaves were imported from Delagoa Bay. Buijs and Albassini were clearly guilty of slave-dealing and kidnapping, yet both were made officials of the District of Zoutpansberg. Apprenticeship was a mere pretext for the purchase and sale of native children and was often used as a polite mask to what were really blatant slave-

dealing operations. Potgieter himself may not have been guilty of the worst of these abuses, but the case against him is very black and the evidence all but compelling.

In the rest of the Transvaal things were somewhat different, and the influence of the Pretorius family seems to have been thrown into the scale on the side of moderation. Even the evidence of the Blue Book acquits those whom it describes as "the Boers generally," "many of the Boers" and "those of the opposite party" of participation in the worst of Potgieter's crimes. Here the government, with an eye probably to the Sand River Convention, was anxious to prohibit slavery, while apprenticeship, though undoubtedly exploitation of child labour, was kept free from the worst of its abuses. On the other hand the incidents of Seleka and of Field Cornet Potgieter in Pretorius's own district, and the constant reiterations of the laws against ill-treatment and violence, show that not all of the party were inspired by the principles of its leader. The government did indeed attempt to check marauding expeditions, but its weakness was notorious, and the wrongdoer, unless his crime was particularly glaring, stood a good chance of escaping the penalty. Contemporary apologists for the farmers and later historians like Theal have alike stressed the good intentions of their government. Yet impotence is a dangerous defence for a state to plead. If the South African Republic was in fact too weak to prevent its burghers from raiding native tribes and from exploiting children in a manner at times but narrowly removed from slavery, then its claim to act as a sovereign state was very considerably weakened. There is good reason for maintaining that the farmers were subjects of the British Crown until 1852, and so long as they retained their old citizenship Her Majesty's Government remained responsible for their actions. If these marauding raids had been directed against a civilized power instead of barbarous tribes prompt demands for compensation would have been made. There was much to justify the legal position of those who urged the duty of the British government to resume control, even at the risk of the appearance of injustice, over those of its subjects for whose misdeeds it might be held both morally and legally responsible.

It is not so easy to judge whether the South African Republic was really as impotent as both sides sometimes attempt to prove. Friends of the Republic may find themselves in the dilemma that if the state really was powerful it was responsible for the scandals that disgraced its native policy; if impotent, then that it was no state.

The worst outcome of the institution of apprenticeship was not, perhaps, the forcible kidnapping of children by the farmers, but the extensive voluntary traffic in them carried on by both parents and chiefs. The custom of marriage by cattle purchase gave to every daughter a definite financial value. When similar opportunities presented themselves in respect of their sons, or again when they realized that the years before matrimony could be turned to profitable account, native parents took full advantage of the new conditions. But it was not only the children of their own tribes that were sold by the chiefs. One apologist for the institution of apprenticeship claimed as a recommendation that chiefs departed from the custom of massacring all who fell into their hands in the course of a tribal war, and traded the children whom they had themselves made orphans to the farmers. The latter, having obtained them in what one Volksraad committee had held to be " a legitimate manner," would be able to indenture them before the landdrost.

The fact that a means of disposal existed ready to hand may actually have encouraged some chiefs to war. There is the instance of the raid made by Makasoel in 1849, and certainly no conflict was ever discouraged by the knowledge that the farmers were prepared to " apprentice " as many " orphans " as the natives could produce. It must be remembered, however, that in most of the raids it was not the apprentice market but the slave market as such that the hunters had in mind. Makasoel was a dependant of Albassini, a notorious slave-dealer : in other words, he was head of a band employed by the Portuguese capitalist to procure victims. Buijs also plundered beyond the eastern mountains, outside the farmers' sphere of influence, and like the others was probably engaged in providing for the sure and certain market of Delagoa Bay. The labour shortage in the Transvaal, together with the existence of this market within easy reach, inevitably encouraged

some of the farmers to attempt to procure slaves from thence. The Volksraad tried to check the practice, and van Breda found it wiser to disguise his "jonge Negers" as apprentices, but Albassini seems to have had no difficulty in travelling about the country a few months later with a waggon load of children whom he valued at £15 per head.

CHAPTER X.

LABOUR AND SLAVERY II.

The Labour Tax.

The labour question was responsible for another institution that earned the name of "slavery." This was the compulsory labour of adult natives that Theal called the "Labour Tax."[1] Though its origins are obscure three main lines of descent may be distinguished. The first was a sort of corvée copied from a similar institution in the Cape Colony, the second is what might be called a "labour rent," levied by individuals upon families, or by the state upon tribes, that settled upon their land, and the third was a tribute that took the form of labour exacted by the state from subjugated native tribes.

In the Republic of Natal the custom was not yet systematized, and the rulings of the Volksraad seem often to have been mere measures of police, aimed at the problem of vagrancy. On the 5th March, 1840, L. P. Meijer complained that Bushmen had been digging pits to trap game, one of which had been responsible for an accident to his son.[2] The landdrost proposed, and the Raad approved of the suggestion, to render the "Bushmen kaffirs . . . liable in future for service" and to divide them among the farmers in the proportion of five families to one master. The Bushman, whose hunting habits cut across the new economy imposed by the white man, was to be compelled to adjust himself to the new system. At the same time the Raad considered the question of free labour, and it was agreed, again on the proposal of the landdrost, that proper service contracts should be drawn up for all free natives employed by white farmers. No contract was to be for more than a year, and no native might be employed longer than fourteen days without having a proper contract made out. Regulations dealing with the issue of contracts might be drawn up by the landdrosts.

[1] *History of South Africa since* 1795, II. 466, and III. 405. [2] Volksraad Minutes.

There is no trace of any formal enactment regulating the corvée in Natal, but various resolutions throw light upon an institution that was one of the antecedents of the Transvaal " Labour Tax." Early in January, 1840, the Landdrost of Congella was authorized to impress free natives for the use of the Harbour Master, while, on the 19th January, 1841, Field Cornet Meyer was instructed to impress natives to widen the bush tracts and make batteries at Port Natal.[1] On the 29th April, 1842, the Landdrosts of Weenen and Port Natal were given permission to make use of all natives living on the town lands of either place who were not in service with the white inhabitants.

One notable characteristic of all these examples is that the forced labour was to be used for public purposes only, while some are obviously military measures, but the Transvaal saw a development of the system. Besides being organized and widened the compulsory labour was made available for private citizens of the Republic. The working of the custom in the interior is thus described by Chapman :[2] " By a law passed in the Volksraad the natives are subjected to a species of taxation which is to be paid in labour : and this enactment, by the way it is often arbitrarily enforced, is a continual source of oppression and grievance to the natives." Livingstone can describe an occasion on which he actually saw the tax in operation[3] : " I have myself been an eye-witness of the Boers coming to a village, and according to their custom, demanding twenty or thirty women to weed their gardens, and have seen these women proceed to the scene of unrequited toil carrying their own food upon their heads, their children at their backs, and the instruments of toil on their shoulders." According to Livingstone both Potgieter and Pretorius defended the practice saying, " We make the people work for us, in consideration of allowing them to live in our country." Both writers speak, as does Theal, of a specific regulation passed by the Volksraad, but there does not seem to be any trace of one in the records, and officials at the Pretoria Archives had no recollection, either of the tax or of any such law.

The official records reveal some references to the institution in full working order. In 1845 or 1846 the petty chief Mattjawa

[1] Volksraad Minutes. [2] *Travels in the Interior*, etc., I. 15.
[3] *Missionary Travels and Researches*, p. 30.

sent to Sekwati asking for help " om dat de menschen hem gekomen zijn om volk te vragen, en hij welt dat niet doen."[1] This points to the existence of a labour levy in the first year of the existence of the Republic of Ohrigstad. Mattjawa was one of the chiefs who signed the declaration recognizing Potgieter as master of the Western Transvaal ; hence he was probably regarded as a dependant of the farmers' government and liable as such to the " Labour Tax." It is possible that the farmers were only looking for workers for hire, but this would hardly account for Mattjawa's determined opposition. On the 20th April, 1848, one van Rensburg was authorised to obtain labour for the construction of a road to Delagoa Bay, and in 1849, when the Volksraad reduced the authority of Buijs over the natives, he was informed that the Landdrost of Lydenburg would be at liberty to make use of him and his Kaffirs. The implication was that Buijs was no longer a semi-independent ruler, vice-gerent of the Volksraad over all the natives within the Republic, but an ordinary dependent chief liable to be called upon by the landdrost to perform a service which might have been either a " labour tax " or a labour " rent." In January of 1850 the United Volksraad made certain regulations with regard to compulsory labour, but the institution itself was presupposed and no attempt made to explain it.[2] Since the apprenticeship code was passed by the Volksraad at the same session it seems probable that the new government, immediately after the union of the parties, decided to take the whole question of the labour supply in hand and codify the customs and legislation that regulated it.

The law of 1850 made the distribution of labour to the people who lived in his ward one of the duties of the field cornet. " Free labour," that is free to the farmer but forced from the point of view of the native, was to be given for periods of not longer than fourteen days for each native. The farmer to whom labour was assigned was responsible for the provision of good food for the workers. Refusal to work on the part of the forced labourer might be dealt with only by the field cornet who, after enquiry into the alleged refusal, might inflict not more than twenty-five strokes with a flat thong. The Raad also announced its intention

[1] " Because the people have come to him to ask for men and he doesn't want to do that."
[2] Volksraad Minutes, 22nd January, 1850.

of discouraging the existing custom of engaging labourers for a whole year, intending apparently to make the use of forced labour more general. Natives already employed upon contract were to be given a calf in payment and discharged. The law can be seen in operation in the request of the Church Council of Lydenburg in 1851 for labour to assist in building the church.[1] The request was granted and the Raad sent instructions to the local field cornets to procure labour for the church in accordance with the law.

The legislation of 1850 simply prescribed the incidence of the labour tax as it affected the farmer who made use of the labour. It did not lay down the manner in which the workers were to be supplied by the tribes, or who was to serve and when. That was evidently a matter for arrangement with each individual chief, and conditions would vary with each case. In spite of the mention of a specific enactment, the supply of labour probably rested upon separate agreements with individuals, and the " law " referred to by the various witnesses may have been either that of January, 1850, which laid down the manner in which labour was to be distributed, or the individual agreement in the particular case in point.

The labour tax is not very difficult to understand, and the Boer defence of it quoted by Livingstone—" we make the people work for us in consideration of allowing them to live in our country "—was not always an inaccurate description. Though it might seem preposterous to one who did not know the history of the Transvaal the claim did actually apply to a number of tribes who had petitioned to be allowed to settle within the sphere of influence of the Republic. Again, there were other tribes which had been brought into subjection by the farmers and were required to pay tribute. Money was scarce, even among the whites—nearly thirty years later on the *régime* of President Burgers was to break down over the absence of a money economy—and the natives had no conception of its use. It seemed quite reasonable, therefore, that tribute should be paid in labour instead of money. This actually happened and the payment of " labour tax " became a mark of dependence. Sechele was free from it and was thus obviously independent, but his sheltering of

[1] Volksraad Minutes, 15th February, 1851.

Moselelie, who was subject to the labour tax, was direct interference in a domestic matter concerning only the Republic.

For the purpose of the tax the tribes might be classified under three heads. The first comprised those who had been conquered by the Boers in battle : the amount of their contribution would be settled by the treaty of peace. Secondly, those who had been subject to Umzilikazi, and who, when released from him, were considered to owe some kind of return for their freedom.[1] This class resisted the tax to the utmost and caused most of the troubles of the state. Third came those who had asked for permission to settle within the borders of the Transvaal and who had been allowed to do so in return for the payment of a certain tribute. In the vast majority of cases this tribute would be the so-called " labour tax," though it more nearly approached a labour " rent." Edwards speaks of tribes being accorded permission to occupy land and says :[2] " this favour is granted with the understanding that the latter [*i.e.*, the natives] are to supply servants as required by an imperative order from the Boer officials at the shortest notice and without the least reference to the wish or the convenience of the natives." Edwards is clearly referring to the exaction of a labour rent.

Sometimes a tribe that the farmers desired to compliment for any reason was not required to pay the labour tax. Its chief was regarded as a " burgher " instead, and liable as such to the burgher's chief obligation of commando duty. The treaty concluded in 1853 between Umzilikazi and the Provisional Commandant of Zoutpansberg contained a provision to the effect that if called upon by the Commandant General Umzilikazi would hold himself in readiness with his warriors to assist the farmers.[3] Though this particular treaty may not have been intended seriously some tribes did undoubtedly accompany the commandos in battle. If the Labour Tax be regarded as a parallel to feudal villeinage, with which it has many points in common, then this feature might be taken as in some way equivalent to military tenure.

In common with the rest of native affairs the administration of the labour laws was entrusted to the Commandant General,

[1] *E.g.*, Mattjawa. [2] Edwards to Sir George Clerk, Copy in L.M.S., Cape Town, 1854.
[3] See page 79.

who usually acted through the field cornets. The Commandant General, for instance, could be instructed " to make the necessary provision for the service of the kaffirs under the authority of field cornet G. de Jager from the Kaffirs of Maleuwe and neighbouring chiefs."[1] This entry comes in the minutes of a meeting held early in 1851, a year after Malleuw or Maluwe had been attacked by a commando and subjugated as a punishment for cattle-lifting and gun-running. He had now become a subject of the state, and it was the field cornet's duty to see that the labour tax was duly paid.

The missionaries Edwards and Inglis were able to watch the labour tax in operation while they were detained at Rustenburg for their trial. The account of what they then saw corroborates most of what has been said above. A few sentences from Edwards' letter gives the impression that what he may occasionally have seen and confused with the official tax was simply the arrangement, still common at the present day, by which a native squatter furnishes a certain amount of labour in return for the land he occupies. If so, this custom must be distinguished from the levying of a general tax upon a chief by the state. It is purely a matter of arrangement between individuals, though there are points of resemblance to the official tax. " Each native," says Edwards,[2] " is expected fourteen days in every year to pay his tax in work for the use of the ground he occupies either in cultivation or pasture." He also explains that for special tasks such as ploughing, harvesting and building the farmers were accustomed to apply for labour to the field cornet. The latter would then make arrangements for calling up whatever was required from the neighbouring chiefs. Livingstone says that herdboys were paid a regular salary, but gives an account of the " labour tax " being put into operation for the weeding of gardens. From this it seems that servants who were required for regular whole-time work were hired and paid for their services, though the Volksraad may have attempted at one time to discourage hired labour. Occasional workers required for specific tasks of limited duration were obtained through the field cornet from tribes that were subject to this particular form of levy.

[1] Volksraad Minutes, 5th May, 1851. [2] L.M.S., Kuruman, 17th March, 1849.

A resolution that may have some connection with the labour tax was passed by the Krijgsraad on the 31st May, 1853. It reads : " the Krijgsraad having considered the need for providing Kaffirs for Messrs. J. Henning and H. Neethling has decided to assign the Kaffirs " Januarij," " Zwartbooij " and " B..... " resident there to the aforesaid persons, since they are widowers with small children, until other arrangements shall be made in the matter at the next sitting of the Volksraad." Part of the resolution suggests that it refers to the labour tax, and that the Krijgsraad was merely apportioning workers to the farmers in question. On the other hand the mention of the widowers and their small children suggests that domestic assistance was required. In that case it would probably refer to apprenticeship, and the Krijgsraad was assigning servants to the farmers without waiting for the regular distribution by lot as the law prescribed. This would account for the provisional nature of its action—it had no right to grant dispensations from a law of the Volksraad—but seems hardly consistent with the fact that the natives were already " resident there."

Theal ventures upon dangerous ground when he attempts to defend[1] the labour tax by maintaining that it was far preferable to the " English " system of imposing money payments.[2] He claims that the burden fell upon the male population alone, and that under the system now in force the menfolk send their women out to work in order to earn money for the payment of their tax. This seems directly contrary to the facts. It is perfectly clear that in any town in the Transvaal or Orange Free State most of the workers are men. The present system of taxation has forced them, who under tribal conditions would have done little of the manual labour, to seek work in the towns. On the other hand the old labour tax might fall upon the women, and undoubtedly did so. Livingstone states clearly that in his own personal experience women were sent off to till the white man's fields. That is only natural, since in the kraals most of the hard work of the fields is performed by native women, and many are employed at the present day for the occasional tasks of a farm. If money had been plentiful the tax would probably have been collected in coin, as being easily the most convenient method. In its

[1] *History of South Africa since* 1795, II. 467. [2] *E.g.*, the hut and poll taxes.

absence recourse was had to payment in kind. There may have been cases in which the tax or rent was fixed in other commodities such as cattle or ivory, but these would not have been nearly so convenient to the farmer and his government as the guarantee of a steady supply of labour.

The incidence of the labour tax did not suspend the practice of hiring labourers. Two instances may be quoted from the records, the first from the years before, and the latter from the time succeeding, the law of 1850. The first is contained in a public announcement of the resolutions of the Volksraad of Ohrigstad on the 3rd and 4th November, 1847.[1] All field cornets were instructed to summon the chiefs in their districts to attend the next meeting of the Volksraad in person. The business would include " certain commands to them to give their people for use among the inhabitants for payment," regulations concerning the hiring of labourers, and steps for the prevention of " unlawful demands " upon them. No record of any such meeting seems to have survived. The minutes may have been lost, but the chiefs displayed no anxiety to trust themselves in the neighbourhood of Ohrigstad and may simply have stayed away. The second example occurs in the minutes of the Volksraad meeting of the 15th March, 1853. The outlawry of Sekwati's tribes was formally repealed, and his followers were given permission to enter the district of Lydenberg to hire themselves out to farmers.

It may be doubted whether at any time hired labour could have been excluded completely. The experience of both mediæval Europe and the South African farmer of the present day agree in affirming that, given the necessary circulation of money, hired labour is much to be preferred to compulsory unpaid labour, and will always drive the latter out of competition. In the case of the farmer it is obvious that the regular routine of the farm could hardly be entrusted to a constant succession of unwilling workers, each of whom had to be instructed afresh at the beginning of his fortnight's term of labour.

No good purpose would be served by attempting to determine whether or no the labour tax actually deserved the appellation of slavery. It is important to distinguish between two things—the suitability and morality of the institution as such and the occasions

[1] R. 129b/47 and Volksraad Minutes.

on which it was put in force. On the face of it there does not seem much wrong with the labour tax. It was a clumsy primitive institution, but conditions in the interior were distinctly primitive, and so long as the pretexts for its exaction were not unjust no objection can be lodged. But was it always justly imposed? The mention of "unlawful demands" in the Republic of Ohrigstad is ominous and shows that unjust demands had actually been made. There is no guarantee that the wars of conquest that resulted in its imposition were always righteous, and much depended upon the trustworthiness of the field cornet, himself a farmer and employer of labour.

This completes the survey of Voortrekker native policy. The best single word to sum up the attitude of mind of the Transvaal Boers is "patriarchal," but the word is capable of great extremes. At its best the patriarchal system recognizes that the privileges of the master are counterbalanced by duties owed to his dependants: at its worst it is merely the disguise for shameless exploitation of those too weak to resist. As a whole the system probably worked well in the interior, but in every age, and in the infant Transvaal no less, there have been men who failed to realize their responsibilities. North of the Vaal there was much shameless exploitation, much barbarity, and much disregard of the fundamental rights of the native people. This was recognized by those who formed the government, and they made sincere efforts to check abuse, but the problem before the South African Republic in the middle years of last century was an impossible one. A few thousand farmers were scattered broadcast over an area as great as that of the British Isles, with no town population, no press, no roads, no intercommunication, no police, and, in fact, no government. Each farmer under his own vine and his own fig-tree did what was right in his own eyes, and if he chose to play the tyrant there was none to say him nay.

The position was complicated by petty squabbles that split the handful of whites into armed camps, and no leader could count on whole-hearted support from the country. The truth is that the Great Trek had overshot the mark: the advance of the Europeans into the interior was too swift, they had overtaxed their strength and lost touch with their base. More than a generation was to pass before the position was consolidated in

the Transvaal territory, while in Zoutpansberg the whites were actually forced to yield ground. Until 1880 the community north of the Vaal lacked the elements of cohesion and corporate responsibility, and lawlessness could proceed unchecked. In the fifties of last century the South African Republic was not a state.

APPENDIX I.

LIVINGSTONE THE GUN RUNNER.

Among the Boers Livingstone enjoyed an unenviable reputation as one of those who kept the Kaffirs well supplied with arms and ammunition, and, in order to improve the market for their goods, kept continually before their clients the hope of a successful war. He himself poured scorn on those who denounced him for " teaching the Bakwains to kill Boers," but it is significant that he nowhere committed himself to a categorical denial of the charge of dealing in the contraband articles. He complained that rumour had multiplied the five muskets owned by Sechele into five hundred, and that his own loan of a cooking pot to the chief had been transformed into that of a cannon. Among the London Missionary Society's papers is the beginning of an article headed the " Story of a Cooking Pot " which was to have given his own version of the affair. On the other hand the commando found at least forty-eight muskets in Sechele's store alone, after his troops had scattered and, presumably, taken the greater number with them. His stock of ammunition must have been considerable, even though his grandiloquent offer to supply the farmers with powder was not meant to be taken seriously. This hardly tallies with the missionary's story of five muskets being the total number owned by Sechele.

Strong suspicions of Livingstone's dealings had been current in the Republic, and after the attack upon the chief's stronghold a patrol set out to investigate the mission station. The official report[1] submitted by Commandant Scholtz may have been coloured by the dispute with Livingstone, but its carefully enumerated facts and its inventory of the goods discovered in the shed bear the stamp of truth. The following is a free translation of the passage that refers to the visit to the mission station :

" I sent also Commandant P. Schutte with a patrol to Sechele's old town, but he found the mission house empty and broken into

[1] T. 2/25, p. 249.

by the Kaffirs, but he found there two large muskets (percussion). In addition native prisoners of war testified that in the house of Livingstone that still remained closed there existed a large store of necessaries of war and that he had, two weeks before, handed thirteen muskets to Sechele. The Englishman Mr. Edwards and Messrs. A. Bijtel and J. Snijman related that the house of the missionary Livingstone had been broken open by Sechele in order to remove powder and lead. I gave orders for the opening of the house that remained closed, we found there more gunsmith's tools than Bibles, and also some half-finished muskets, so that the place resembled a gunsmith's rather than a school or church."

The account is straightforward and gives a clearer picture than Livingstone's own, which was based simply on what Sechele thought was good for him to know. The original burglary of the house and the removal of a certain amount of ammunition was the work of the chief. There is no sign that Livingstone would have enjoyed his making free with his property, but the farmers probably took this as another sign of the close intimacy between the two. (The percussion muskets may have been left behind owing to the difficulty with their ammunition.) The commando remarked that the missionary's house was "empty," hence it may have been sacked before their arrival.

So far, it is true, the only evidence to connect Livingstone personally with the trade in arms comes from the native prisoners, always an untrustworthy source, though the finding of the tools and half-repaired muskets might be regarded as suspicious. The convincing proof, however, comes from Chapman, Livingstone's trader friend, who writes[1] of his visit to a native tribe: "They [the Makololo] would have nothing to do with anyone but Nake[2]—he was their trader—who would give them two barrels of powder, a large heap of lead and sundry other articles for a small tusk of ivory, or mend a dozen guns for a paltry remuneration." This evidence cannot be set aside. Chapman was a friend of Livingstone, and makes his statement without any animus whatever. The fact of the missionary's share in the powder trade and his repairing of guns for the natives must be taken as definitely established.

[1] *Travels in Southern Africa*. I. 289. [2] The native name for Livingstone.

The direct testimony of Chapman's evidence is borne out indirectly in a letter from Livingstone's fellow missionary, Edwards. "One chief," he writes, "lately wished to lay upon me the service of repairing guns for himself and people. I made a firm resp. ful resistance, giving him to understand that I did not consider it my duty, and wanted neither his sheep nor goats or Karosses. He reminded me of some who repair guns at other stations." No names are given, but since there were not more than half a dozen stations in the district the field of those to whom Edwards refers is very considerably reduced.

But the proving of the fact of the trade throws no light upon Livingstone's motives. There is no need to suggest that he was merely intent upon making money or that his aims were purely selfish and sordid. Theal suggests a very reasonable explanation.[1] Livingstone was a married man receiving a mere pittance from his Society, and like most of his fellow missionaries was obliged to increase his income.[2] Trade was common among the missionaries of the time, and Mr. Preller seems to think[3] that even Owen, despite the absence of custom, kept a "store" at Dingaan's kraal. (Probably he has been misled by Owen's reference to the "store" or "stock" of provisions from which he obliged the Trekkers.) Money was useless in the interior, and every missionary, whatever his wishes, was forced back upon barter to supply his wants. So it was with Livingstone. Arms and ammunition were always in demand, his own early training stood him in good stead when natives came with guns to be repaired, and thus his business grew.

Livingstone himself always maintained that the natives required guns for hunting purposes and not for the destruction of their fellow men, and this is all that he personally had in mind. But guns that would bring down a buck or an elephant could be used against enemies, both white and black, and he should have been on his guard against even the appearance of countenancing war. It was unfortunate that no one in South Africa, whether among his superiors or his friends, could warn Livingstone of the risks that he ran.

[1] *History of South Africa since* 1795, III. 393.
[2] See the Letter of Bishop Gray quoted on page 93.
[3] *Piet Retief*, p. 205.

APPENDIX II.

THE ANTI-SLAVERY AGITATION OF 1868 AND 1869.

The period of this agitation comes outside the widest limits that can be assigned to the "Age of the Voortrekkers," but some treatment is necessary to round off the essay. Part of its interest lies in the introduction of a motive other than disinterested philanthropy on the part of those who criticized the states of the interior. The denunciations no longer issue solely from Exeter Hall but are sponsored by newspapers in South Africa, the Legislative Council of Natal, and members of that new class, sprung up since 1853, of Cape Colony politicians. An official Blue Book[1] was published in 1869 containing the "Correspondence relating to the alleged kidnapping and enslaving of young Africans by the people of the Transvaal Republic" together with letters, whose presence in this galley is not so inconsequent as may seem at first sight, evoked by the discovery of gold in Umzilikazi's country. To the same period belong a number of pamphlets, most of them in criticism of the Boers, called forth by the same controversy.

The tone of much of this pamphlet literature is best illustrated by the uncompromising beginning of "The Dutch Boers and Slavery in the Transvaal," written by Mr. F. W. Chesson, Secretary to the Aborigines' Protection Society: "The Transvaal Boers are a community not much known to English People, and they do not improve upon acquaintance. The following pages are written with two objects: first to show that the Boers send out commandos to kill the Kaffir men, and to enslave the surviving women and children: and secondly to call attention to the fact, that, as they are building up this institution of slavery, in direct contravention of the treaty of 1852, which forms the foundation of their independence, it is the duty of the British Government to enforce the prohibition of the nefarious traffic."

The Governor of the Cape and High Commissioner for South Africa was the very level-headed and correspondingly unpopular

[1] P.P. England, 1869.

Sir Philip Wodehouse, who took up a cautious attitude and refused to allow himself to be rushed into precipitate action. He earned much ill-will thereby, and it was partly by way of protest that the Legislative Council of Natal, with the official members abstaining from the vote, passed a series of resolutions in 1868. The Council was not renowned for interest in the welfare of the native races,[1] but its fourth Resolution complained that "ever since the annexation of the Orange River Sovereignty (since abandoned) in 1848, the emigrant farmers who settled over the Vaal River, and formed a government of their own, under the style of the South African Republic, have carried on a system of slavery, under the guise of child apprenticeship—such children being the result of raids carried on against native tribes, whose men are slaughtered, but whose children and property are seized, the one being enslaved and sold as "apprentices," the other being appropriated."

The new agitation seems to have begun with a letter dated the 4th December, 1865, from a certain G. J. Steyn of Potchefstroom, to the Governor of Cape Colony, of which the crucial passage is the following: "On the 1st instant Messrs. Carel Smith and Hayman arrived here from 'Zontpansberg' (*sic*) with two loads of young Kaffirs (thirty-one in number) males and females varying in ages from three to twelve years; these were publicly disposed of here at from £15 to £22 10*s*. per head, or, in some instances, exchanged for cattle." Steyn alleges that marauding raids whose object was to procure children were of common occurence in the Zoutpansbergen. In support of his claim he attached an extract from *De Republikein*, a semi-official newspaper, which corroborated his facts, though condemning the practice most strongly: "His Honour the President," it runs, "is still in Zoutpansberg, trying to settle the unfortunate disturbances there, and no news has yet reached us as to his success. . . . We are glad to see that on his route he has taken the first step towards putting down an evil which has for the last four years been growing to alarming proportions, we allude to the slave dealing which is fast becoming a lucrative branch of commerce, and which has openly been carried on in the face of the 'Grond Wet' which expressly states that 'no slaves or slave dealing shall

[1] See Brookes: *History of Native Policy*. Chapter III., passim.

be allowed in this state,' whole waggon loads are continually being hawked about the country, the most of which are procured from Zoutpansberg, where several men have for years past made it a regular trade, most of the children being bought by them from the natives at low prices, who kidnap, and often in a less merciful manner obtain them from tribes in the hunting veld ; and small parties of natives are often fitted out with goods and sent as far as Delagoa Bay to traffic for ' black ivory.' . . . We hope and trust that all help and support will be given to the President in this good work. We believe that two men are now in confinement, awaiting the return of His Honour, at whose orders they were arrested while proceeding from Zoutpansberg with cargoes of black children."

Steyn submitted the names of two ministers of religion living in Potchefstroom, Messrs. Ludorf and Jeffreys, as able to confirm his statements, and they were called upon by the Governor to give their versions of the affair. They did so, corroborating Steyn, but with two qualifications. Mr. Jeffreys demurred at the expression " open sale " ; he pointed out that, while the two white men concerned were quite prepared to admit the facts, the children were not " exposed for sale " nor were the actual transactions " public." Both Jeffreys and Ludorf explained that, together with Steyn, they had gone to Mr. Munnik the Staats Procureur, who is reported to have " expressed his strong abhorence " and to have ordered the arrest of the two men, even though they had taken the precaution to comply with the letter of the law and supply themselves with " indentures " in due form.

After making these enquiries the Governor addressed a protest to President M. W. Pretorius, but the latter assured him that the guilty persons had been arrested and punished before the protest arrived. Attached to the President's reply was a report of the legal proceedings, which gave the information that Heindert (the Hayman of Steyn's letter ?) lived in a cave near Schoemansdal, the capital of the lawless district of Zoutpansberg. The Governor then recommended to Downing Street that the matter be allowed to drop, and nothing further was heard of it for another two years.

The second of those responsible for the agitation was P. H. Roselt, editor of the Transvaal *Argus*, the opposition newspaper in the Transvaal territory. He took a leading part in protest

meetings held at Potchefstroom early in 1868, but his chief share arose from two letters which he addressed to the Governor of the Cape. Being extremely anxious for his personal safety he stipulated that his identity be kept secret, with the result that his letters, though referred to more than once, were not printed in the Blue Book. In their place the Commissioner at Cape Town supplied a communication from a certain M. S. Fitzgerald, which presented a blood curdling array of horrors and was said to bear out the " general tenor " of the reports already forwarded. An anonymous letter in the correspondence forwarded from Cape Town may possibly have come from Roselt but it gives nothing beyond general charges.

A third witness was a Mr. Martin, whom the Aborigines' Society described as " a resident in South Africa for twenty years." His story reappeared so frequently and in so many different connections in the agitation that it is better to quote verbatim from the Blue Book :

Maritzburg, Natal, June 7, 1867.

In the Year 1864, after a sea voyage to Delagoa Bay, 36 hours from Natal, I took a 700 miles trip to Zontpansberg, Trans-Vaal Republic, which you will see on Hall's map. On my return I had charge of two waggons with ivory. I objected to any natives accompanying the waggons, but was told that they were going to Natal for work. When we reached the capital, Pretoria, the natives (six in number) were forcibly seized and taken away from my protection by a Dutchman. I appealed to an official, who, I regret to say was an Englishman, who assured me that the boys would run away, and that they were taken away from me because they had not a pass, although the waggon had been searched for runaways before we reached the capital. Next day, on coming to the Vaal River, boundary of the Free State, I was astonished to find that the brother of the Dutchman, who was a passenger in my cart, actually had one of the boys so forcibly seized."

Then follows a description, somewhat irrelevant, of the boy's death by drowning in the flooded Vaal River, although even Martin does not blame the white men present. In fact he certifies that " every effort was made to save him " but follows

this with the amazing remark, "I contend that this native lost his life through having been taken out of my protection, and I suppose that the other five are still in bondage." The rest of the letter contains an indictment of apprenticeship in terms resembling those of Chapman, with the information that the writer had been offered a slave in settlement of a debt.

The evidence is not altogether satisfactory. Steyn waxed almost hysterical in some of his later letters to Cape Town, Roselt's contribution cannot be traced, while Martin wrote in an exaggerated style and was more than a little shaky in his facts. He represented the waggons as reaching the Vaal River the "next day" after entering Pretoria, which, since the nearest ford across the river is about 130 miles distant,[1] must have been something of a record for the journey! How the natives in question came under the writer's valued protection he does not say: from his own account he tried to drive them off! They probably did some odd jobs on the journey and received food in return, hoping to be able to slip across the boundary in the guise of servants. The arrest of natives for failing to produce a pass is common enough at the present day, and there seems to be no reason for doubting the English field cornet's explanation in the present case. Martin's charge, "I suppose the other five are still in bondage" has no scrap of justification, and if one of the boys was released in time to take service with Martin's passenger the assumption is that the remainder were liberated at the same time.

Both Steyn and Martin are revealed by their letters as being of a type not uncommon in little frontier towns and obscure districts, where men may earn an easy notoriety by contests with established authority. Of Martin a contemporary pamphlet[2] says: "The most Indiarubber like stretch of fancy is the great abduction case, which may serve as an example of South African fiction. This is told by a man as well known in a certain colony as Day and Martin's blacking is known in England: he would die if he weren't showing up 'the Governor,' or somebody or something; he must have his name in type."

It was this pamphlet that attempted a defence of the South African Republic against the critics of its native policy. Published

[1] The daily progress of an ox-waggon is not above thirty miles.

[2] *To Ophir Direct*, p. 27.

in 1869 under the title of *To Ophir Direct*, it described the visit of Hartley and Mauch to the gold fields north of the Limpopo, and, since its object was to encourage immigration, may be expected to give too rosy a view of the situation in the Transvaal. Its author called himself Bamang-Wato, though he may have been Hartley himself, but his work is interesting as an example of the sort of case that could be made out for the farmers, while his trenchant attack on the " philanthropist " type of agitation shows a use of weapons of controversy that had formerly been reserved to the missionary side. Bamang-Wato's opinion of William Martin was quoted above, his treatment of the charge of slavery is long but worth reproduction in full :

" The trading station for ivory was Zoutpansberg, here lived and flourished several Goa-Portuguese traders, a Portuguese vice-consul under the Governor of Delagoa, who was also Superintendent of Natives,[1] under the Dutch Republican Government, and several Boer hunters. Five years ago, much ivory passed through this " gate " into the Republic. Through scheming and some treachery the hunting has been closed to the Dutch. The policy of the Portuguese has been to keep the Boers and Kaffirs at variance, and this has been carried to the extreme point, in order to divert the ivory to the port of the Portuguese. It is stated in a petition of the Boers to the Volksraad, that the consul has turned friendly Kaffirs against the Boers, by misleading the volunteers who were sent in order to settle the question. He pretended they were *enemies*, and so worked out his plan. Masela, the chief who owns the elephant country, north-east of Zoutpansberg, has forbidden the Boer hunters to shoot there, and has stopped many of their ' black shots,' and seized their guns. He was an ally of the Portuguese ' *vice* '-consul (a stress on the *vice* mind) and they played into each other's hands pleasantly enough. The supposition is that the Portuguese vice has made for himself a ' pot ' in Delagoa Bay, by forwarding ivory there, obtained from Masela's Veldt ' on the quiet ' ; while the Dutch were led by him to believe that there was no thoroughfare.

From him, it is said, and others of his kidney, emanated the system of ' saving the little children in native fight,' which they contend is an improvement upon the former plan, of killing

[1] Albassini.

everything in battle, even the cocks and hens in a kraal.[1] It is certain that a market value attached to children among the contending tribes, has saved the lives of many small blacks; the question is, does it not also partly induce the fighting?

It is difficult for some people dispassionately to talk on this subject. There is so much exaggeration and repetition of hearsay that like a Sheffield invoice, 55 per cent. at least must be deducted to begin with. British intervention is desired by a large class of people interested in trade in Africa, and the card used to play is 'Slavery.' What an outcry is raised against this young state because in its infancy two or three instances of retaliation on blacks has (*sic*) been recorded. Rev. gentlemen (*sic*) send reports of outrages home which on trial they cannot prove, for when searched into, 'the man who told the man who told them is unfortunately dead.' "

Bamangwato categorically denies the charge that human beings were openly offered for sale, and subjects Martin's allegations to very searching criticism. In effect, however, he admits all the charges and apparently believes that the prospect of a market for children encouraged native wars. But while there is no need to share his belief in the touching guilelessness of the Boers it should be noticed that Albassini's double dealing is confirmed by a passage in Chesson's pamphlet "*The Dutch Boers and Slavery.*" The latter quotes at second or third hand from the *Staats Courant* of the 4th December, 1864, an account of an expedition led by Superintendent Albassini. He seems to have set out to "punish" a chief named Magor in spite of Landdrost Verceuil's energetic protests in his favour. Chesson regards the incident as incriminating the state of which the Portuguese was an official, but it also bears out Bamang-Wato's contention that Albassini's policy was deliberately contrary to the interests of the Boer population. The pamphlet quotes a further case in which Michiel Buijs, "field cornet of the coloured tribes round Schoemansdal," destroyed the tribe of a chief named Tambuna. This he had done to oblige another chief named Monene, but the latter was himself accused of theft by Masela, and he appears to have been using Buijs to accomplish a private revenge. Both

[1] It had grown up in Natal thirty years before.

stories show complete anarchy in the district of Zoutpansberg but they do not necessarily incriminate the bulk of the population.

One point in connection with the agitation of 1868 calls for comment—its sudden recrudescence after several years of quiet. This is the more remarkable since the Governor of the Cape had endeavoured to closure its first signs of revival in 1864 and it was maintained chiefly by Legislative Councils and Chambers of Commerce instead of the missionary societies which had borne the brunt of earlier controversies. The explanation of the phenomenon emerges in the reading of a pamphlet printed at Cape Town in 1868 under the title " British Rule in South Africa : A Collection of Official Documents and other Correspondence suggesting the adoption of a policy which shall ensure the peace and progress of the Orange Free State and Transvaal Republic and the Aboriginal Tribes in their respective relations with the Cape of Good Hope and Natal." The author's remedy for the ills of South Africa was annexation, and his work gains an interest through the long extracts quoted from correspondence columns of Cape Colony newspapers. " If the prospect of finding gold be deemed good ground for British intervention beyond the Vaal River," writes a correspondent who signs himself " Afrikander," " does not the alleged existence of a system of slavery within the territory of the Transvaal Republic justify an appeal to the Imperial Government to extend its influence in that direction ? " The existence of gold had been definitely established by the discovery of the ancient workings of Rhodesia by Hartley and Mauch in 1867, and, though details were not yet forthcoming, business interests in the Eastern Province and in Cape Town were in the field. The hands of the authorities were tied north of the Vaal River by the Sand River Convention of 1852, and nothing could be done until that was set aside. To lure Her Majesty's Government into action the Cape interests revived the missionary cry of slavery and the revelations of Steyn and Roselt were furbished up anew.

" Afrikander " continued with the suggestion that the Cape Administration should " appoint a Commission to proceed to the spot with the object of collecting evidence as to the existence of slavery and gold in the Transvaal country, with full power to treat with those chiefs . . . If the report of such a commission

should establish beyond doubt the substantial reality of slavery and gold in these distant parts, there is not much fear but that the people of England would support Her Majesty's Government in substituting British authority for that of the two Republics in South Africa." It is difficult to avoid the suspicion that "Afrikander" was writing with his tongue in his cheek, but the compiler of "British Rule in South Africa" quotes his contribution in all seriousness. A suspicion of cynicism is not absent from the letter of "Anglo-African" which appeared in the *Cape Argus* for the 18th October, 1868, and was quoted in the same pamphlet. "If Mr. Layard [the Slave Trade Commissioner] be only half as anxious as his predecessor Mr. Surtees, to preserve the consistency of Great Britain with respect to the emancipation of slaves and the checking of the Slave Trade on the East Coast of Africa, he would work with zeal and energy to establish the reality of gold in South Africa."

But the revelation of a motive behind the agitation does not necessarily disprove the truth of the allegations. No change had taken place in the interior since the campaign of 1852–3 and the Grondwet of 1858. The law definitely forbade slavery and kidnapping raids, but tolerated the exploitation of child labour and the purchase of children from their parents and chiefs. Abuses continued to exist, but though the President and government tried to put down the more blatant forms of slavery, their own ideas on the subject seem to have been somewhat elastic. While in the Zoutpansbergen the year before Steyn's revelations the President addressed a letter[1] to P. Vercueil, a storekeeper in the Spelonken and brother of the Landdrost of Schoemansdal, in which occurs the passage following:

"If you get some little Kaffirs be so good as to buy six for me and send them when you can and write me what it will cost to procure

3 girls and three boys."[2]

The word "buy" is perfectly distinct, and its implication cannot be avoided, though it may be assumed that the President wanted apprentices and not slaves. There is no indication as to whether Pretorius completed his deal, but Mr. Goldman, lately

[1] Copy in T.A. 92/23 of the Pretoria Archives.

[2] "als u klijn kaffers krijg wees so goet en koop voor mij 6."

in charge of the Pretoria Archives, traced his connection with a similar transaction in the Lydenburg District in the next year. The Journal (Dagboek) of the Landdrost's Office at Lydenburg contains the following entry for the 12th May, 1865 :

" I the undersigned declare hereby that the kaffir upperchief Umzwaas[1] has sent three kaffir orphan children for the Honourable President M. W. Pretorius his ally, two kaffir girls estimated to be 10 years and the kaffir boy estimated to be eight these kaffir orphans being named Lea, Sara and Jaantje, and he gave in return two white blankets.

" Thus done on the date as above,

" C. Potgieter, Landdrost."

It might be claimed that the children were merely an official gift from Mswazi to the head of a neighbouring state, and that the President thereby incurred no personal responsibility, but Pretorius passed over all the Volksraad's precautionary laws relating to gifts and apprentices, and the children were duly indentured to him the same day. The Contraktboek Kleurlingen contains the following entry, which is in the common form for all registrations :

" Be it known that I, C. Potgieter, Landdrost of Lijdenburg, have bound to His Honour the President of the South African Republic three kaffir orphan children named Lea Sara and Jaantje estimated to be 10 and 8 years old.

" And this transaction is in force from the present until the orphan children aforesaid arrive at the age of 21 and 25, according to the laws, and the President aforesaid is held and obliged to treat the orphans aforesaid according to the regulations contained in No. 208 of this book of which a copy has been given."

This contract, No. 208, which was taken as a model for all succeeding indentures, bound an apprentice until the age of twenty-five to a certain C. J. Trigardt, who was to supply him with food and covering, to treat him without cruelty, and not to take him beyond the limits of " this community."

Pretorius therefore would get eleven years labour out of each of the girls and seventeen out of the boy, and since the regular price was about two blankets per apprentice he seems to have made a good bargain.

[1] Mswazi.

APPENDIX III.

The Apprentice Law in operation.

The industry of Mr. Goldman was responsible for a collection of examples of the actual working of the laws governing the institution of apprenticeship.[1] Those that follow were extracted from the Journal of the Landdrost of Lydenburg : the first is an instance of the alleged discovery of starving children, the second of a " transfer " of indentures for the legal maximum fee of Rds. 30 or approximately £2 5*s*., the third of trading for children with natives, and the fourth of a transfer in exchange for cattle. They are extremely valuable as illustrating the various clauses in the law, and, though their date rules them out of the body of the essay, there had been no change since 1858.

" 24th May, 1864. To-day appeared Messrs. A. F. Jansen and W. Albrecht to give notice that each desired to register a kaffir orphan child which he had picked up on the Steenkampsberg in the path of the expedition of Mswazi, coming from Maleeuw and Mapoch, starving and almost numbed. The little kaffir of the first applicant is 3 years old and named Geluk, that of the second according to estimate nine years and also named Geluk.

" A. F. Jansen."
" W. Albrecht."

" 22nd June. To-day appeared Mr. Casterop giving notice that he wished to register a kaffir orphan child named Mei, estimated 3 years old. L. Casterop aforesaid declared that he had obtained the kaffir orphan child from W. de Kock and gave for him for it the value of Rds. 30.

" Thus done on date as above.

" L. Casterop."

[1] See his letter of 31st August, 1926 in 29 T.A. 92/23.

"22nd June. To-day appeared Mr. G. T. Becking giving notice that he wished to register 4 kaffir orphans named Joseph, Oortman, Windvogel and Roos, estimated age 6 years, 2nd, 4 years, 3rd, 3 years, 2 years. G. T. Becking aforesaid declares that he obtained or bartered these from the kaffirs of Mswazi and gave for them 8 blankets.

"Thus done on date as above.

"G. T. Becking."

"30th June. Appeared Mr. S. J. Meintjes desiring the registration of a kaffir orphan child named Soldaat, estimated age 6 years. Mr. Meintjes declares that he had obtained the orphan child aforesaid from Mr. E. H. P. Steyn and he gave Mr. Steyn for his indenture two oxen or the value of them instead.

"Thus done on date as above.

"S. J. Meintjes."

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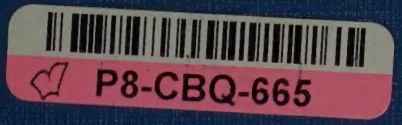
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